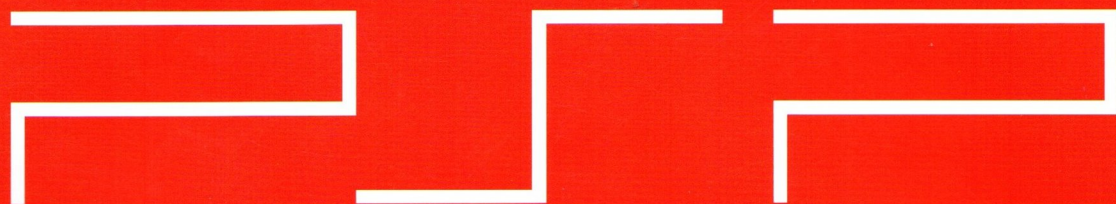


FROM THE MAKERS OF PlayStation®2

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

SPRING 2006 (VOL. 3) • £4.99



TM

PlayStation®Portable

THE OFFICIAL GUIDE BOOK

# Gangs of London™

Gangland warfare goes handheld  
as *The Getaway* returns for PSP



Photo



Music



Video



Game



Network



3+

www.pegi.info

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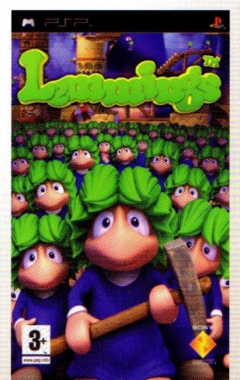


[www.yourpsp.com/lemmings](http://www.yourpsp.com/lemmings)



## HOW MANY CAN YOU HANDLE?

Be the brains behind hundreds of mindless little lemmings.  
But careful! If you let your mind wander, so will they...  
...off a cliff.







PlayStation®Portable

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#3 MARCH 2006



## WELCOME TO PARADISE

**T**hey can't say we didn't warn them, those people yet to join the Sony handheld revolution. The plans are on track, with an incredible one million PSPs shipped in the UK (ten million worldwide), and now there's no excuse not to be gleefully handling the greatest piece of kit on the planet.

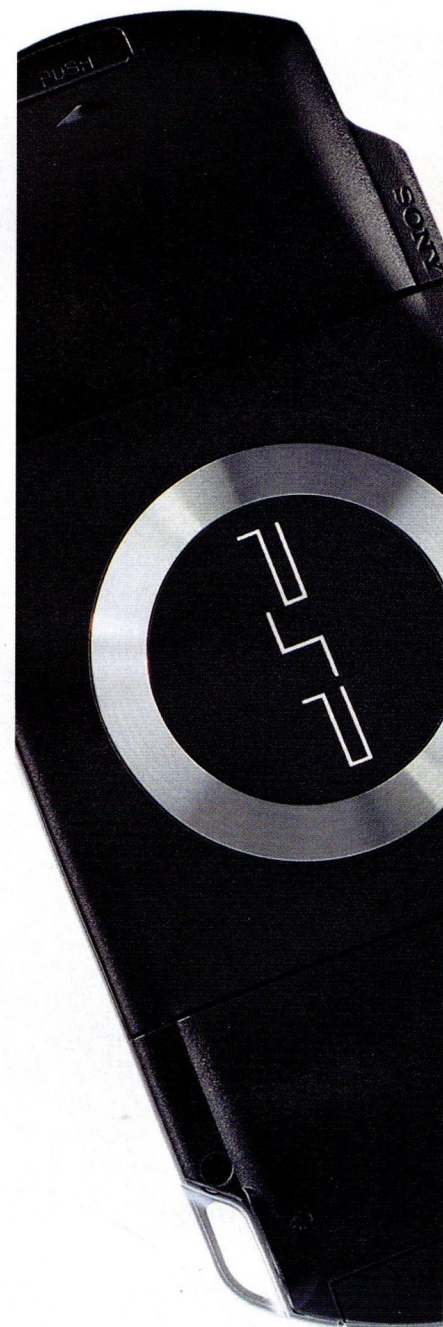
This should be a 'mwahahaha!' moment – but it's not, because the mission is a benevolent one: to spread happiness and joy, encourage strangers to play together, and help folk enjoy the best music and movies in a portable paradise. Awww...

And the *Official Guidebook* you hold in your ever game-ready hands is the ultimate companion for any trip around PSP's entertainment utopia. Whether you're here as a tourist ready to be dazzled by the games on our twinkling horizon (flick to the reviews section double quick), or already a resident of PSP-ville looking to find out just what it's capable of (leg it to our in-depth guide section), this magazine should be your constant companion.

And just because all is rosy in our garden, don't think everything you'll read and gawp at on these pages is as cutesy as deranged puzzler *Loco Roco*. Smashing its way onto this month's cover like a hungry Mitchell brother battling to reach an out-of-reach fry-up is *The Getaway: Gangs Of London*. It's as grimy, moody, nasty and downright delicious-looking a game as you'll see on any console, let alone a hand-held. Oh, and it's a massive exclusive scoop too.

Don't think we're just obsessed with games, mind. You'll find the latest on UMD movie releases as well as info on everything from getting started with wireless multiplayer gaming to transferring tunes to your PSP in the love-soaked pages that follow.

We're glad you could be here, so enjoy your stay with us... ■

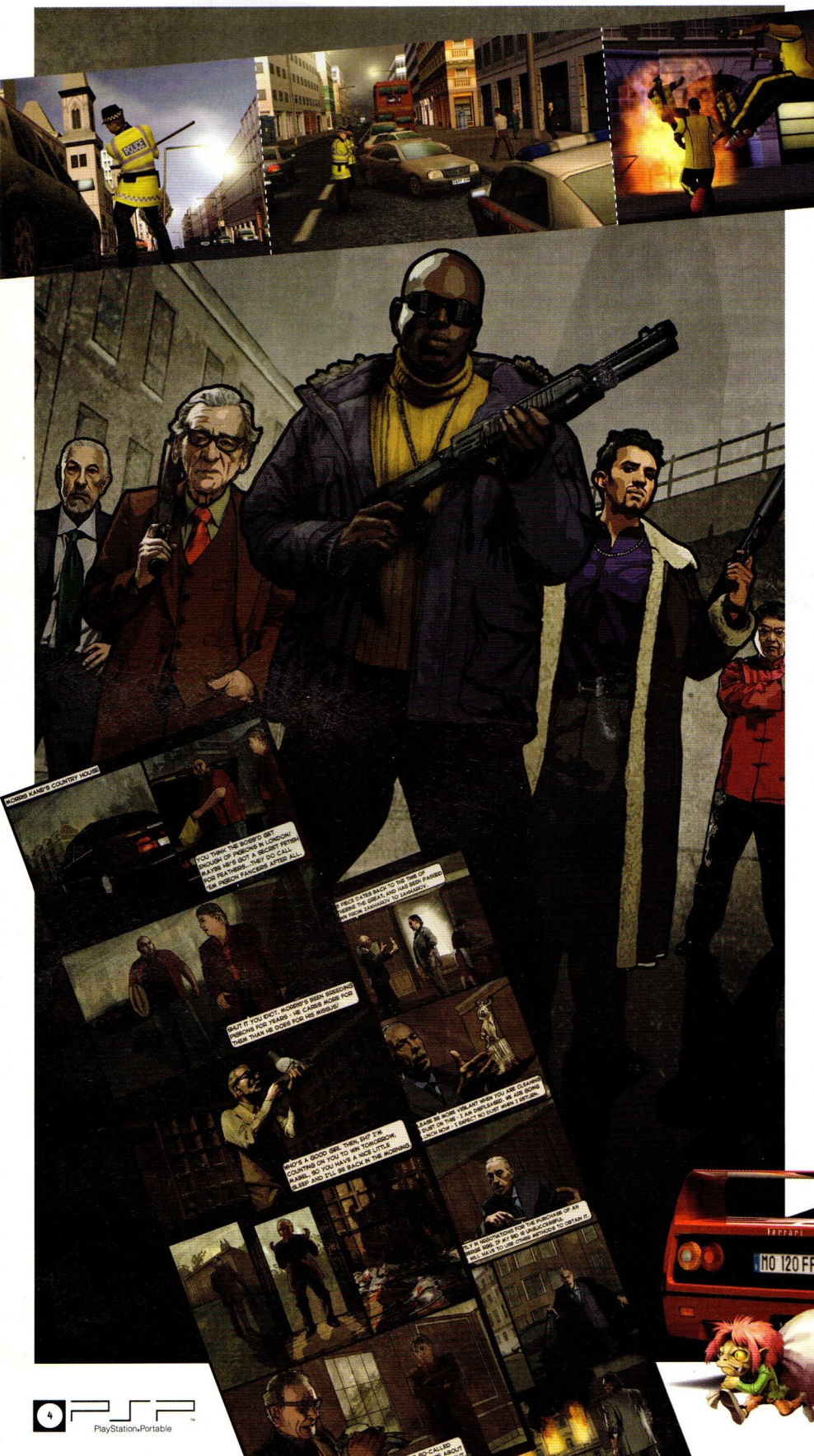






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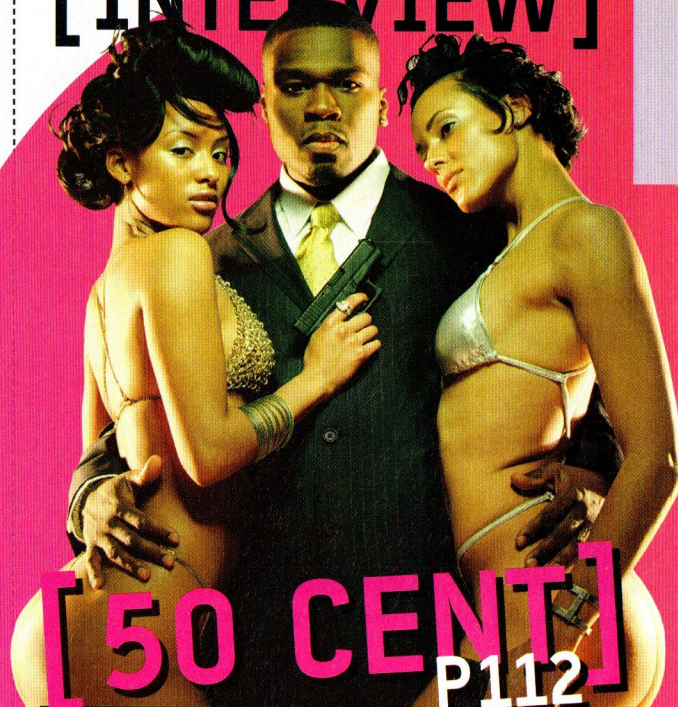
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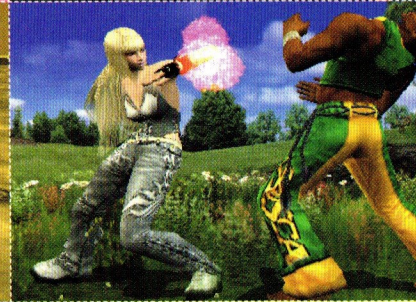
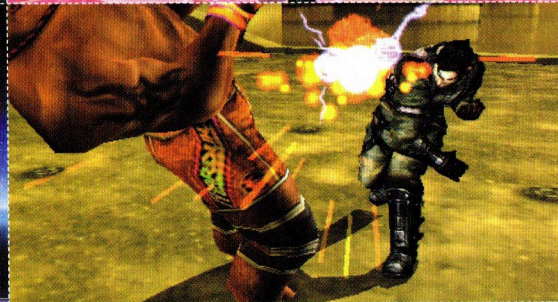
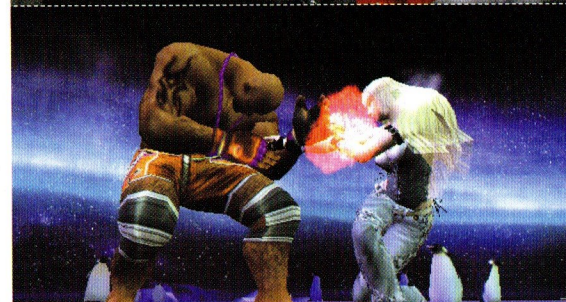
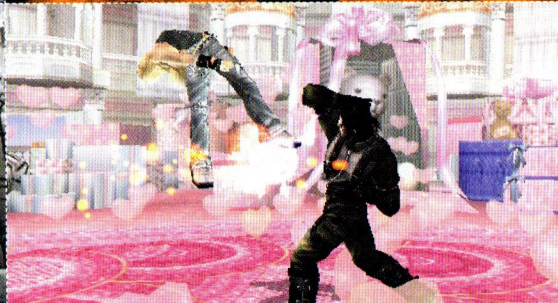


FIDDY TALKS EXCLUSIVELY TO US ABOUT WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE BULLETPROOF EMPIRE



# [FRONTEND]

News, gossip, trivia, the whole nine yards



Hello handsome: possibly the best looking PSP game yet





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**LEGO STAR WARS II**  
 >p.8 The original trilogy gets  
 plastified for its PSP debut



**OUTRUN 2006**  
 >p.9 Superb arcade racer with  
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# GET TEKKEN OUT

The world's best brawler on PSP

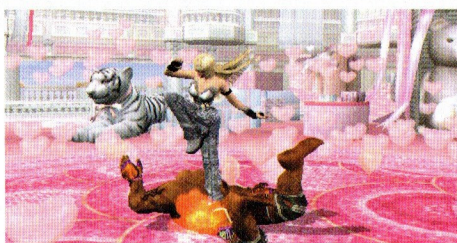
**G**rand Theft Auto, Tomb Raider, Burnout, Virtua Tennis, Ridge Racer – the list of big-name games making the jump onto Sony's unstoppable handheld is long and illustrious. Now one of the missing pieces of the PSP puzzle is finally sliding into place, as ten-year strong PlayStation staple *Tekken* makes its bone-crushing debut on PSP.

The new title, *Dark Resurrection*, rips out the heart of the latest arcade version, and stuffs it full of exclusive features for its new portable format. How much can Namco cram into our handheld friend? The character list has 30 names on its roster, including two fresh fighters Dragunov and Lili. They join all the old favourites, including Armour King, who makes his emphatic return for this mighty, handheld scrap. Featuring 19 of the best arenas from the *Tekken* series, the game has been buffing up its multiplayer abs in preparation for some hardcore one-on-one face-stoving.

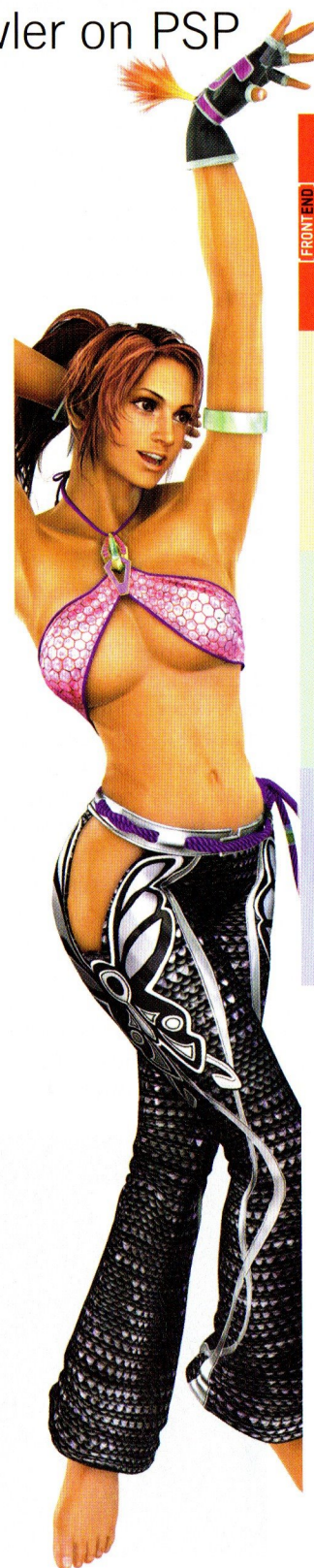
According to Sony the emphasis is on 'playing anytime, anywhere'. This means two-player WiFi gameplay, bulked up by a host of quick options that will let you beat your friends to a digital pulp using customisable characters and game modes. Looking brutally beautiful, and coming complete with fresh cut-scenes and story elements, *Dark Resurrection* is a dream come true for the *Tekken* faithful. How the complex combos that have become a hallmark of the series will translate onto the PSP's button set remains to be seen, so expect more on this when the first play-tests start to emerge in the coming months. The game hits Japan this summer, so expect to be throwing punches in the UK before the year is out.

We'll have more info on this stellar looking game in the next edition of the magazine; or if you can't wait that long, check out *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine*, which will have more exclusive shots and news in their next issue... ■

Newcomers, Dragunov (right) and Lili (left) are one of the highlights of *Tekken* on PSP



Typically, Valentine's day ended in violence





**L**uke out! Here comes Solo (and multiplayer, we hope), action in a classic trilogy-inspired sequel to the game of the film series prequels. Confused yet? [Yes, and Leia off the weak puns please - Ed]

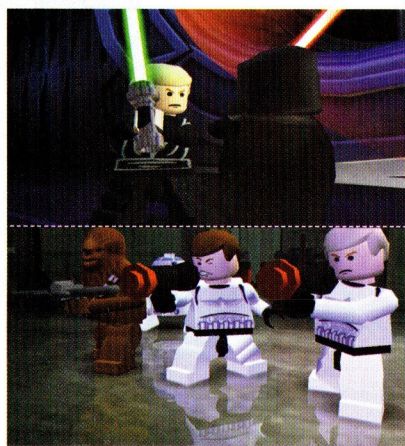
Okay, then Chewie this over: such was the positive response for last year's *LEGO Star Wars* (award-winning, doncha' know), that the bosses at LucasArts decided the classic film trilogy deserved the same treatment.

As you can see from the amazing visuals, rather than just bricking it, the boffins at developer Traveller's Tales have, if anything, improved their ability to lend real emotion to the plastic-faced toys. Seriously though... how cool does Han look? Correct: 'very'.

Naturally, it doesn't hurt that Episodes IV, V and VI (*A New Hope*, *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return Of The Jedi*) are about an interstellar mile better than the (spit) modern movies. But the addition of vehicles and creatures that can be used or exited at any point - our money's on Luke's landspeeder and Han's Tauntaun at the very least - will mean genuine gameplay variety, too.

Plus, a Free Play mode - unconfirmed yet for the PSP, but we're using all our Jedi mind tricks to persuade the developer to include it - will follow the fundamental principles of LEGO, allowing 50 new playable characters to be customised by sticking separate body parts together.

There's no word on WiFi functionality, but you can feed us to the rancor monster if it isn't included. LucasArts reckons it'll be out in time for autumn. So, we'll save our next lot of forced puns until then; despite wanting to fit 'Boba's your Uncle (Owen)' in somewhere. ■



With all the classic scenes included, this looks like a fanboy's wet dream

# EMPIRE BUILDING

## *LEGO Star Wars II* turns on its targeting computer...





# THE COAST WITH THE MOST

Connection equals content in *Out Run 2*

**W**e all know that Sega's revitalised arcade racer *Out Run 2: Coast 2 Coast* will be one of the hottest handheld properties around when it skids onto the PSP later this month, but did you know the portable version of the game will come with a boot-full of secret content?

Taking advantage of the connectivity features built into Sony's handheld powerhouse, developer Sumo Digital has included a selection of juicy spare parts for anyone who connects their game save with an existing PS2 profile.

Using the USB connection, linking your PSP and PS2 results in two things happening; the first being that any *OutRun* miles collected on either version will be combined. Clock enough of these up, and you'll be able to start unlocking tracks, music, and more eye-meltingly quick cars within the game.

However, the real benefit of linking the two version is that it allows you access to a pair of special Ferraris (the F430 and the 328GTS), a handful of fresh stages and a new set of exclusive missions.

The new missions take place in the Holly's Heart Attack section of the Coast 2 Coast mode, whereas the new stages (which are variations on the Beach level) can be selected straight away. That sound? Segaphiles crying tears of joy. ■

Below: your cut out and keep guide to all five female emotions



ANY ONE...



# YOU WANT SOME?

Get ready for four-way fighting madness with *Power Stone Collection*



**G**ot three mates and a score to settle? Put the gun down and try this instead. *Power Stone Collection* compiles revamped versions of the Dreamcast classics, offering frenzied beat-'em-up action for up to four players over WiFi. Best of all it uses game sharing so you only need one UMD for everyone to get involved.

It's basically an old school party brawler. Players are let loose in a variety of multilevel, destructible arenas and are encouraged to clatter the crap out each other using their fists, feet, chairs, tables or whatever else they can get their hands on. Best of three wins. Key to victory however are the power stones themselves. The game takes its name from special gems scattered around each level which allow players to transform into more powerful fighters. While in an altered form you'll gain more powerful moves and as a result have a big advantage over your mates for as long as the effects last. It's a simple idea but it's meant to be. This is all about fast, brutal dust ups as you and your friends charge around each level throwing everything and the kitchen sink at each others faces. But if you want to mix things up then you can completely customise a battle and choose from a variety of options like tag team rounds or three-on-one grudge matches.

This new edition combines characters, levels and weapons from the two *Power Stone* games, and also adds new levels, weapons and game modes. For example the new Bomber Battle matches throw in a few explosive devices just in case you didn't already have enough to deal with. But don't worry if you haven't got any mates nearby to brawl with, there are a host of activities to keep the lone combatant busy. And playing on your own lets you unlock and create new weapons, characters and levels to use in multiplayer matches. Expect to be offered out sometime towards the end of the year. ■



Crisp cartoon graphics mixed with frantic comedy violence... we like

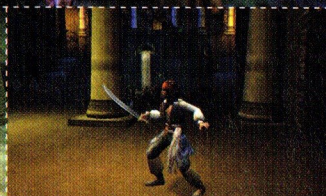




# PSP PLUNDER

*Dead Man's Chest* contains handheld gold

Based on the big-budget Disney film of the same name, due to dock in our cinemas this summer, the game sees you assuming the role of Jack Sparrow as he fights to uncover the treasure locked in the Dead Man's Chest. It's a classic pirate plot, and one which sees you encountering almost every piratical cliché in the book, including cutlass duels, pistol shooting, and sailing around on a creaky galleon. Although we're yet to test the game's mettle in terms of combat, it's clear from these fancy-britched screens that the whole thing is costing Buena Vista Games a whole heap of doubloons. Captain Jack is looking as lifelike as an inch-high sailor can, and his moves seem to have been extremely well animated by the developer - implying a heavy focus in the sort of acrobatic combat that will make the Prince of Persia look like a club-footed clutz. Expect to see *Dead Man's Chest* arriving alongside the blockbuster film on 30 June. ■

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**ANY  
TIME...**





# OLD SKOOL RULEZ

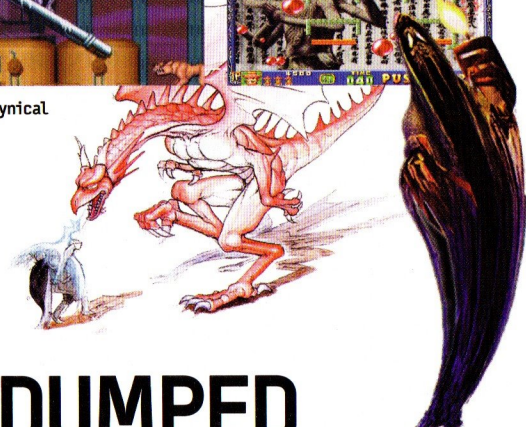
Capcom retro collections coming to PSP

**T**wo new collections of classic games are heading your way this summer - *Capcom Puzzle World* and *Capcom Classics Collection Remixed*. The first of the two brings together all three of the original *Buster Bros* games, *Super Puzzle Fighter* and *Block Block*. *Buster Bros* involves breaking bouncing bubbles into increasingly smaller and faster moving fragments until the screen is cleared. *Super Puzzle Fighter* on the other hand is a *Lumines*-style block puzzler that lets you compete against the PSP or a friend as two on-screen fighters trade punches as the bricks are cleared. Finally, *Block Block* is a nasty take on a *Pong*-style bat-and-ball game where your bat progressively shrinks as you play.

*Capcom Classics Collection Remixed* on the other hand collects together 20 famous games from the publisher's back catalogue, including the original *Street Fighter*, *Strider* and scrolling WWII shooter *1942*. Yester-gazing gamers can blow the dust off both collections this spring. ■



Old gold or cynical cashing-in?



## YOU ARE SO DUMPED

Worst girlfriend ever gets kidnapped again in *Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins*

**T**his is the fourth time Arthur's missus has been nabbed. He's the knightly hero in *Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins* (who always ends up fighting demons in his underwear). This is a brand new installment in the infamously hardcore side scrolling adventure series. Arthur clearly hasn't worked out a way to stop the demons taking his other half down to the underworld, but he has at least learnt a few new tricks to help get her back.

The traditional zombie-bashing has had an overhaul for PSP. The usually linear action is now broken up with multiple pathways, so rescuing the princess involves a little more than just running left to right, killing all-comers. You'll actually have to look for her this time. You'll also be helped by a few new skills, like the ability to climb ledges to get to previously unreachable areas. There's also a levelling up system for developing your combat and magic abilities, plus a range of extra weapons (including crossbows and sickles) and upgradeable armour to help you lay the supernatural smackdown. It's out this autumn, once Capcom's finished balancing the notoriously nails difficulty curve. The good news, though, is that there's going to be save points, and you'll also respawn from the same point you died. Stop tutting, retro fanboys. ■



The visuals have been slightly 3D-ified, but the game's still viewed from side-on

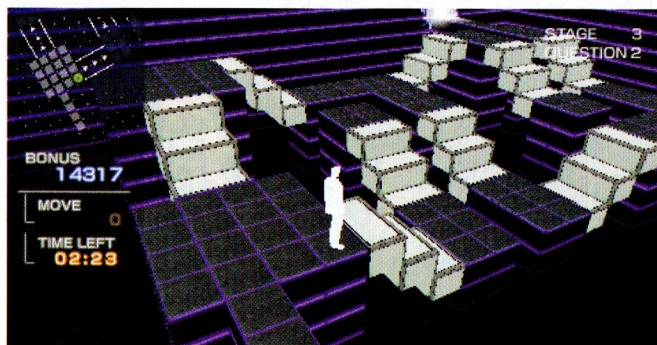


We've played it, and yes it's hard like mountains



# MIND YOUR PS AND QS

New game improves player's intelligence! (See, told you mum)

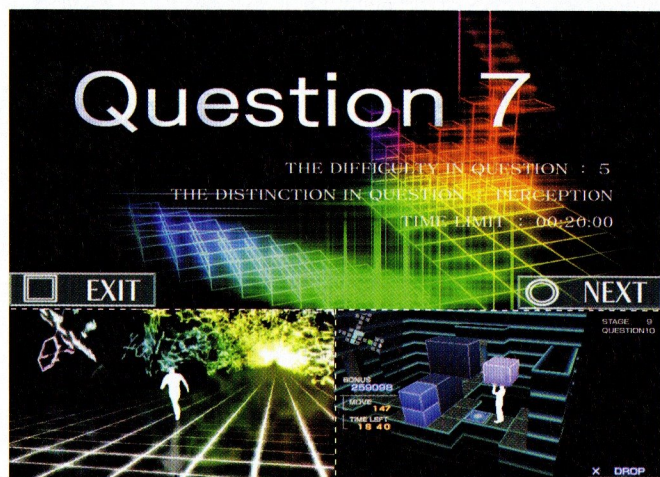


Like being trapped inside one of the IT department's brains

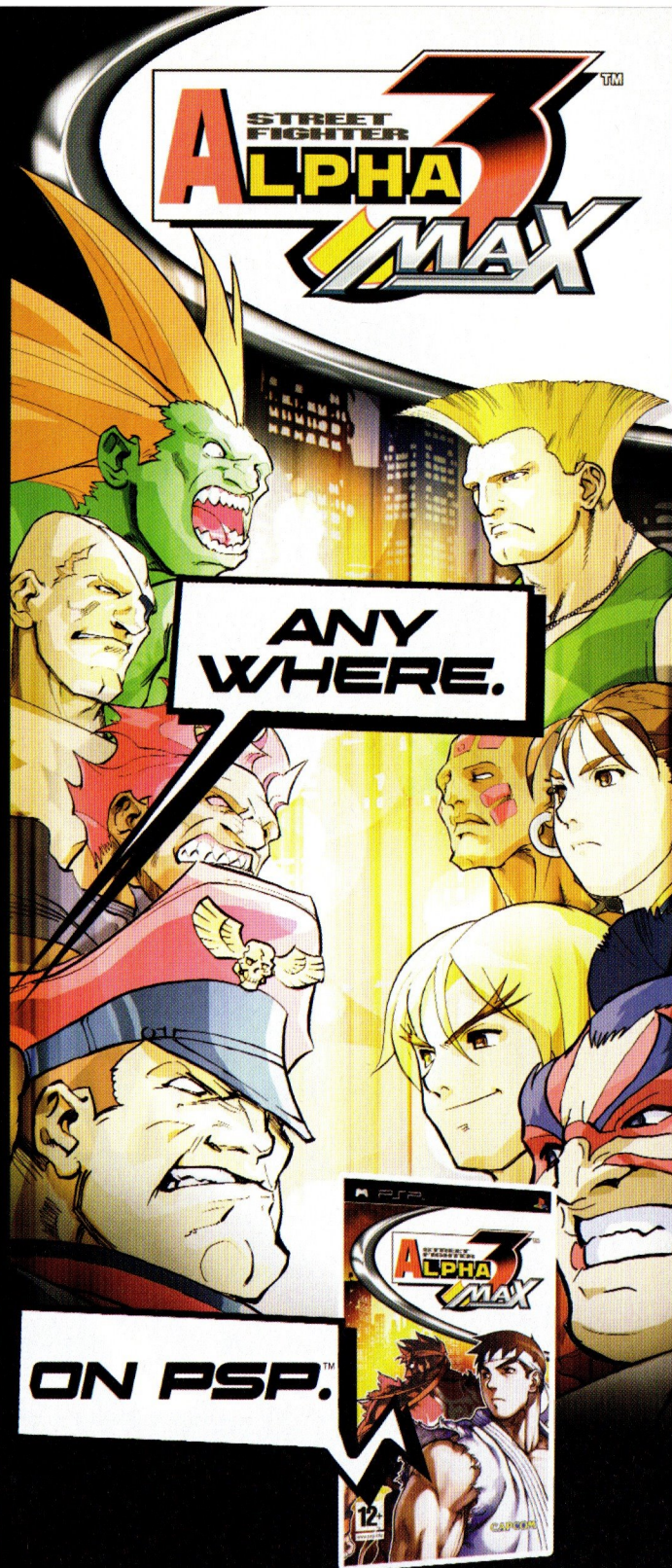
Sadly, being great at games still doesn't automatically mark you out as an intellectual heavyweight. Being able to win all the gold medals on *Burnout Revenge* just doesn't carry the same prestige as the ability to craft beautiful prose, or add up without using your fingers. However, there may soon be an exception in the form of *PQ: Practical Intelligence Quotient*.

This game is simple, but possibly brilliantly so. You control a VR man, whose only objective is to get from point A to point B in each of the game's 100 stages in as quick a time as possible. You move the androgynous semi-hero with the PSP's D-pad and perform a limited amount of actions with a single button. Easy, right? No. The number of moves you can make per level is restricted, and there's also the additional worry of encountering guardians, who will try to stop you from reaching the level's exit.

The real twist in the tale is that *PQ* is actually testing you. Every move you make and every time you record will be stored in the memory, and then used to measure your IQ. That's right: *PQ* actually measures how smart you are, letting you know whether to apply for MENSAs membership or start perfecting your burger-flipping skills instead. Not only that, it can also upload your scores to a worldwide leaderboard via WiFi, so all your mates can see how well (or atrociously) you've performed. The game is already a massive success over in Japan and the States, and now D3 has signed it up for a UK release this April. We reckon they should add in a function whereby the PSP starts laughing at you if you take too long. ■



Edutainment, you say? Not sure this is what we signed on for, Sony



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- **Outrun 2006: Coast 2 Coast**
- **Project Zero 3: The Tormented**
- **FIFA Street 2** • **More...**

It's go  
time!

**ON SALE 23 FEBRUARY**

Content subject to change. Don't panic though, it probably won't





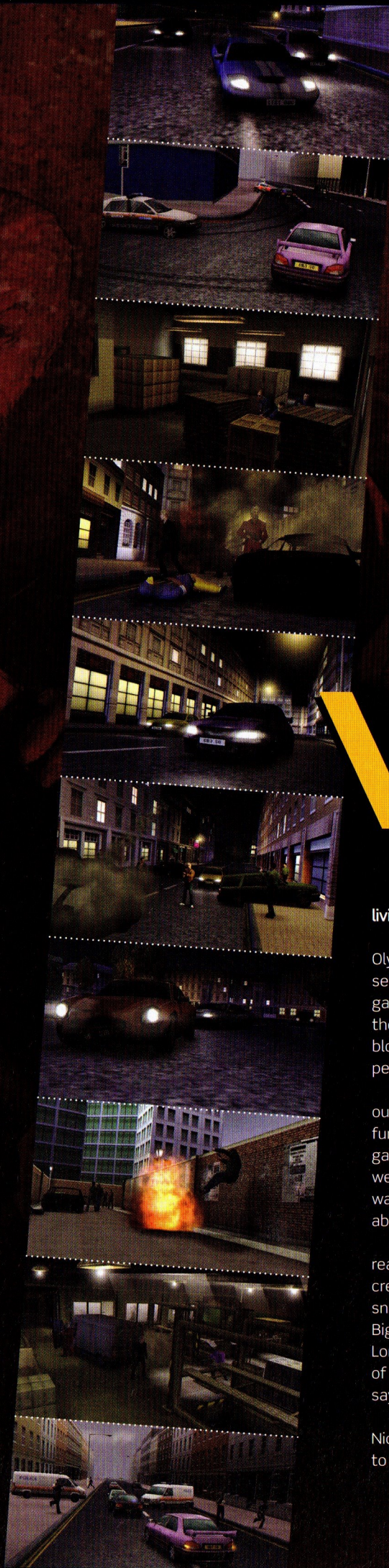


● Game Name: Gangs of London ● Publisher: Sony ● Developer: Sony ● Release: 2006 ● Website: [www.yourpsp.com](http://www.yourpsp.com)

# LONDON'S BURNING

Sony squeals and tells all about  
The Getaway: Gangs of London





**Y**ou'll never feel safe in the capital again, thanks to *Gangs Of London*, a *Getaway* game set in the same world as its PS2 big brothers, but which stands alone in its fight against clean living and public order.

This is the London the International Olympic Committee didn't see when they selected our capital as hosts for the 2012 games. In *GOL*, crimelords battle for control of the streets and ethnic divides spark bitter and bloody rivalries as five factions suffocate peace and strangle tranquillity.

"We know we have something special on our hands, because we are having so much fun playing it ourselves," says Daniel Navarro, game director of *GOL*. He adds, "basically, we were given the freedom to make the game we wanted, how we wanted – this was never about creating a port or a sequel."

At the core of *Gangs Of London* is the realistic map of the city which lends a credibility to a game which invites you to sniff at the foul-stinking under-belly of the Big Smoke. "It's a really broad depiction of London's criminal underworld with loads of elements you won't have seen before," says Daniel.

Some of the themes are familiar, however. Nicking cars, mowing down rivals and fighting to take over an entire metropolis, while

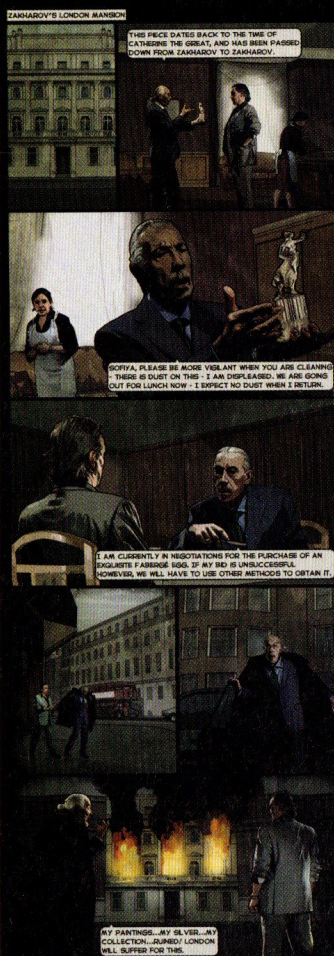




## MEET THE FAMILY...

**The Russians**

Patriarch Zakharov is a nasty piece of work, obsessed with art and determined to lay his blood-stained hands on the world's finest artefacts by hook or by crook. But usually by crook. When his pad goes up in smoke the Big Smoke's about to come under fire (erm...)



"Let me take you by the hand and lead you through the streets of London..."



fending off the unwanted attentions of the coppers has a ring of GTA.

This is gang action London-style, however, and the city serves up a completely different menu of nasty blighters – Cockney, Triad, Yardie, Pakistani and Russian groups are at the centre of this Brit crime war.

The development team didn't happen upon these groupings by chance. They researched recent criminal history in the UK and decided that these five gangs – with a bit of poetic license – invoke a multicultural London that reflects the real thing.

There's no overall advantage to the player in choosing any one group – you just select the gang you think is the coolest, Daniel explains, then you sit back and enjoy different slants on the core game.

"They have different motivations, backgrounds and characters which are reflected in the graphic novel stories," Daniel says, before explaining certain specific bonuses for each group, "the gangs also favour different weapons, have varying advantages in the on-foot sections and drive different vehicles."

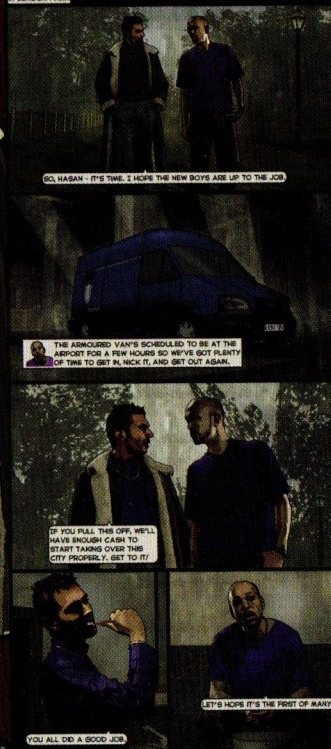
An example: the Triads use fast, souped-up Asian cars which are seriously speedy but aren't as tough or aggressive as others. The races, escape or stealth missions might be easier with this gang, but more skill will be needed ramming vehicles or getting into brutal close combat.

## MEET THE FAMILY...

**The Pakistanis**

Organised criminal Talwar has his eyes fixed on the big prize – ruling over London as the city's sole crimelord. With the strong familial ties of his fellow Pakistanis, he knows he'll be able to persuade an army of young men to become his foot-soldiers in the battle for power.

A LONDON PAIN



But we're getting ahead of ourselves here. Driving is only one part of a game that's ambitiously split into two main sections. "We really wanted a game which could be played whatever mood the player was in – from a quick pool game while you're waiting at a bus stop, to a frantic combat mission, to a strategic multiplayer battle against friends," says Daniel.

The action game takes in real-time missions that mainly involve driving vehicles and kicking the crapola out of rivals. More on this a little later.

Then there's the Gang Battle mode, which embroils players in an epic turf war. Daniel





begins, "if you know Risk, and you mix it a bit with Poker, well – it's something like that," but we're still not sure what he means...

"Okay, it's a turn-based mode set within the same London map, but it's very different from all the other action modes," he says, explaining, "all the moves are made in secret and are resolved at the same time, so there's a lot of bluffing and trying to guess your opponent's moves involved."

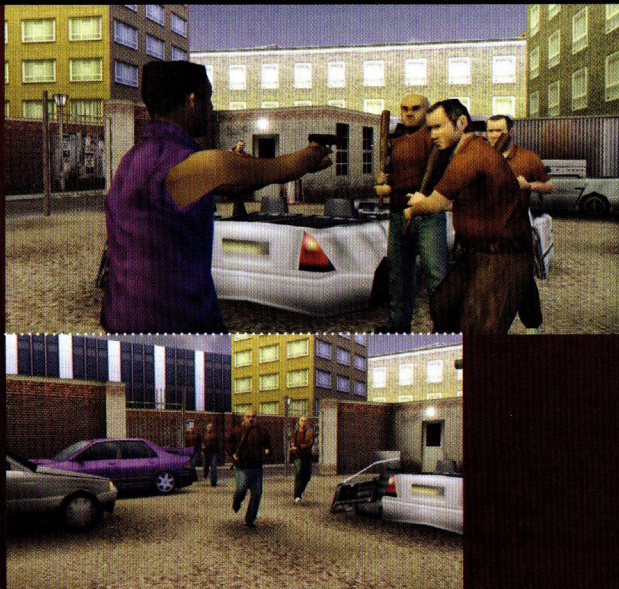
The result is a strategy game in which, say, you might send ten of your men to take control of Covent Garden, moving them from Soho. Thanks to the turn-based nature of the game you won't know if the enemy reinforces, escapes, or a third or fourth party join the fight until you've already committed to the attack. And only one winner will take all. It sounds like a potentially gripping multiplayer game and will surely provide a valuable change of pace from the action game.

## Back to the action

Of course action remains the prime focus for *The Getaway* in *GOL*. "The driving elements are a key part of the action game and we've tried to make them as varied as possible by using different mechanics like ramming, escorting, chasing, escaping, or stealing," says Daniel.

We pressed him for examples of the kind of driving missions that typify the game. With a quick turn of the thumb-screws he gave up some vital info and revealed a diverse structure. One minute you could be tearing down Oxford Street in a high-performance sports car, trying to kidnap someone's daughter, the next you'll be getting a freezer back to Shoreditch in one piece in a bullet-riddled van.

"Either way," says Daniel, "there's something amazing about speeding around a recognisably real city in a handheld game." Clearly, though, there's more to *GOL*'s action game than just hammering the accelerator. It seems the line between driving and on-foot action is often blurred, as missions involve more than one mechanic and, the



Fortunately the gangs are colour-coded so you can easily tell who's batting and who's fielding

development team tantalises us, enemies will be smart enough to, say, in the middle of a fight, get into a car and try to run you over. When you are behind the wheel, you could find yourself doing anything from ramming the enemy off the road, trying to reach a certain destination in a certain time limit or attempting a drive-by shooting.

Plus, there are plenty of vehicles – and not to say weapons – to choose from, all of which reflect the characters of the different gangs. You can nab any one of 34 different vehicles, with everything from sports cars and

**One minute you're tearing down Oxford Street in a sports car, trying to kidnap someone's daughter, the next you'll be getting a freezer back to Shoreditch in one piece in a bullet-riddled van**

military vehicles through to taxis, buses and even ice-cream vans available to buckle beyond recognition.

Your arsenal of weapons is just as impressive – there are shotguns, machine guns, pistols, satchel charges and grenades. And for those who prefer their fighting more up-close and personal, a series of 'hands on' melee weapons such as baseball bats, lead pipes, sledge-hammers and – the Triad favourite – cleavers.

The game is sewn together thanks to a seemingly rich plot. "This game is not about single narratives," explains Daniel, adding "there are probably around 200 different characters involved in our missions. These range from thuggish henchmen and the merciless gang bosses themselves through to some really colourful characters.

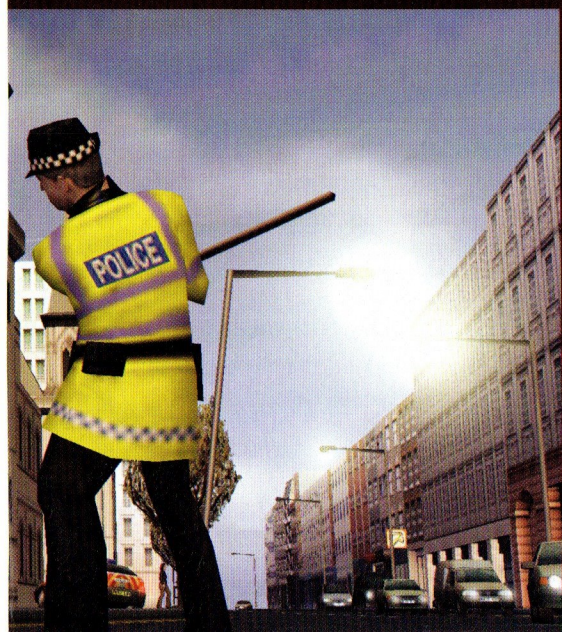
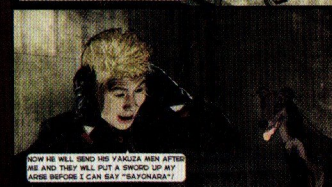
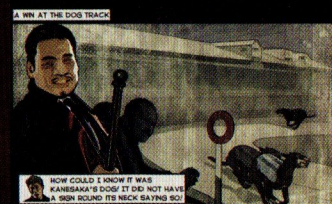
"My favorites include the Angel assassins, who are brother and sister, or The Snowman, a twisted torturer with a fondness for amputation." Nice.

As you can see from the shots, the developers haven't had to compromise to squeeze the London of the narrative's backdrop onto the PSP. Techies might like to note that the game has been tailored to the

## MEET THE FAMILY...

### The Triads.

No story of gang warfare would be complete without the Triads. In *GOL* these boys will be a tough proposition, thanks in no small part to the fact they complement their willingness to pack a shooter with their martial arts skill and expertise with traditional bladed weapons.







Yardies get to work on this motor – and its occupiers – with sledgehammers and firearms. Teach them to nick the best parking space, eh?



PSP's technical strengths and doesn't stream from the disc at all as Daniel's team has developed a unique compression technology.

Yes, there are fewer textures here, but the city looks impressive and boasts a huge draw distance, plenty of detail, and, Daniel assures us, a solid frame-rate. Don't worry – that's the end of the technical bit, gore fans...

## MEET THE FAMILY...

### The Yardies

EC2 Crew gang leader Mason's just like any other upstanding citizen. Except that he's into his gun crime, sleeping with other people's wives and generally sticking to the wrong side of the tracks. When his lover's bumped off the boy goes ballistic and vows to avenge her death...

**Choose the guy at the back who is armed with grenades, recall your other men from a brutal firefight, lob one into the room and switch back to a machine-gunner to wipe out any survivors**

## The Variety club

Variety seems to be something of a byword for *GOL*. While the five gangs don't serve up five completely different games – playing through with a new gang you will reveal many of the same basic missions – there will be plenty to catch your eye.

For starters, you'll have a whole new set of character attributes and weapons, different cars and you'll get the chance to see some new story angles and new graphic novel sections.

The developers are hoping you'll feel an affinity for each of the gangs too, a factor that should be reinforced by the use of squad play within the action game. Not only can you switch in real-time between differently-armed characters at any point in the mission, but you can issue commands to the players you are not currently controlling directly, both individually and to the whole group.



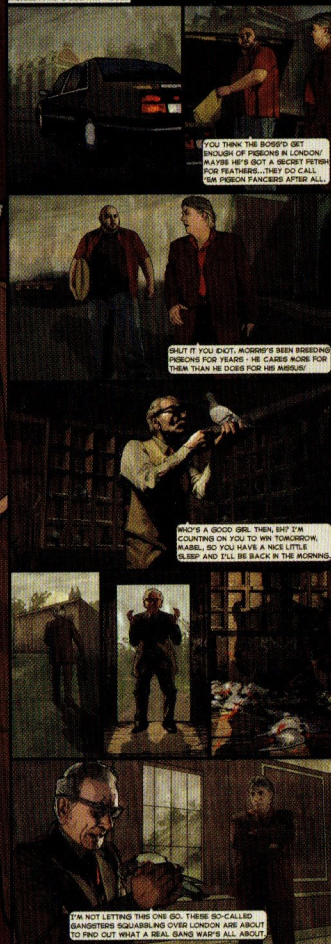
As well as wide-open spaces, you'll be trading blows in hotels and posh manors too...

## MEET THE FAMILY...

### The Cockneys

Oil! Oil! These traditional East End hard men hanker after the days when the Krays ruled the roost. Speaking of roosts, when Morris Kane's beloved pigeons are mowed down in their coop another man with a van full of rocket-launchers is ready to make the rest of London pay...

MORRIS KANE'S COUNTRY HOUSE



"This opens up really nice tactical play in missions, says Daniel. "Choose the guy at the back who is armed with grenades, recall your other men from a brutal firefight, lob one into the room and switch back to a machine-gunner to charge in and wipe out any survivors. It adds a completely new dimension to the action," he says.

Daniel is confident the characters will display realistic AI in squad situations and can point to incidents in development that show just how clever your nasty team-mates can be. "My first 'wow' moment during development was when I saw a character who I was trying to kill get in a random traffic car and escape when he saw he was low on health," he recalls.

The variety continues through a raft of additional game modes. As well as the pub games (see the I'M OFF DOWN THE PUB box, bottom right) you can cast yourself as a porky America sightseer in Tourist Mode. By taking snaps of landmarks you'll unlock hidden extras, though the development team remain tight-lipped on just what it is you might be able to uncover.



While not strictly a separate game mode, the Knowledge, is a new way of experiencing the city by roaming free – it's a chance to drink in the detailed recreation of London.

Basically, you can jack a taxi at any point and explore the city – when in the iconic black cab, you will see street names displayed on-screen and give yourself the chance to acquaint yourself properly with London's layout. It's a nod to the real-life Knowledge test the city's cabbies take to showcase their grasp of the capital's layout.

"This is something that gamers told us they had wanted in the *Getaway* games, in which the lack of on-screen info could make familiarising yourself with the city difficult," says Daniel, adding, "we hope to make even more of this as development continues."

A more meaty addition is the Tube mission element, which offers up quick challenges which range from escaping Oxford Circus armed only with a baseball bat while being pursued by cops to mowing down 70 Triads with a machine-gun.

The actual number of levels like this is unlimited as sending a game demo using the PSP's GameShare technology will unlock different missions for each user. "No two missions will be the same as our system uses your PSP's unique identifier to generate the level," explains Daniel.

While mission objectives will vary, basic elements will include gun fights, escapes, assassinations, stealth and protection missions. When you combine this with different numbers of enemies and police – plus recognisably differently styled and sized environments – the Tube missions could provide a bustling alternative to the main action and turn-based games.

## Armed response

There's little doubt that *GOL* is a response to critics of the well-received *Getaway* duo on PS2. The games did push style to the fore,



*Gangs of London* features an array of vehicles at your disposal, each with their own distinct performance and handling characteristics – but all offering in-ye-er-face excitement

occasionally to the detriment of substance. So what's changed?

"Everything," Daniel replies, explaining, "our graphic novel crime stories are really strong (and a big departure from the cinematics of *The Getaway* games) but it's the gameplay that's the complete focus this time around."

"The main thing we addressed is not to take ourselves too seriously. It's a game. We believe that this playfulness is particularly important given the portable format – PSP gamers want small doses of fun on the move. And so do we!"

Clearly Daniel's team has developed the kind of game they were desperate to play on PSP – an adrenaline-fuelled action affair based in a real city. "We are excited by so many different things – *GOL*'s accessibility, the 'graphic novel' gangster stories, the controls, the open game structure, the huge variety of game types..." Daniel enthuses.

The game is shaping up to be a truly immediate experience, with the fat trimmed off missions so there's no to-ing and fro-ing along the same path in reverse, and a huge array of game modes to keep you playing. The odd sneaky reference to previous games aside, this is an all new *Getaway* and we can't wait to take it out for a spin... ■

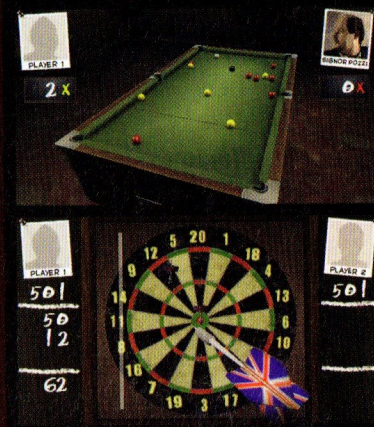


## I'M OFF DOWN THE PUB

If you ever get bored of the main action in *GOL*, or if you're simply tired of a life of brutal crime and endless bloodshed, why not nip to the boozier? A raft of mini games, including darts, pool and skittles have been chucked on the UMD so you can enjoy smoke-free pub fun even before the total smoking ban comes into effect next year.



There's an amazing amount of realism in this detailed recreation of London – you could almost zoom in and see the three points being added to this guy's licence in real time... well, almost





# PREVIEWS

**W**henever new technology hits the shops, the worry for early adopters is whether it'll be 'future proof'. Will it be supported for years to come? Will it be able to integrate and adopt even newer technology as it comes on-stream? Will it be as fresh and exciting in a couple of years as it is now? For the PSP, the answer to all these questions is an emphatic 'yes'. This next batch of games embrace WiFi gaming as the next big thing, while some are even looking to the Internet to allow you to play anyone, anywhere. The future really does start here... ■

TOMB RAIDER

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KILLZONE: LIBERATION

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TALKMAN

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MEGA MAN POWERED UP

PAGE 39



BUBBLE BOBBLE

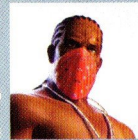
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DEF JAM

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SPLINTER CELL ESSENTIALS

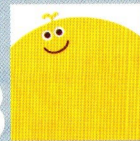
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LOCO ROCO



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METAL GEAR ACID 2

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ASTONISHIA STORY

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The whole game is played out in a third-person view, meaning you can see the enemy AI in action and act accordingly

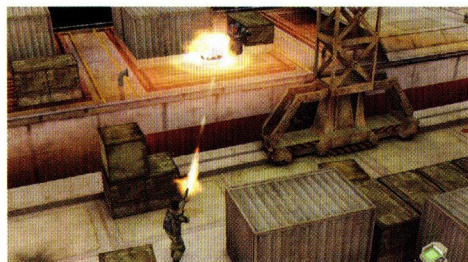


That 'don't play with fireworks' rule is null and void if you're fighting evil interplanetary foes

# Killzone: Liberation

Freedom's the name of the game in this play-anywhere sequel.

● **Genre:** Third-person action ● **Publisher:** Sony  
● **Developer:** Guerilla ● **Release:** TBC  
● **Website:** [www.yourpsp.com](http://www.yourpsp.com)



One day, baddies will stop filling their evil headquarters with a load of exploding barrels

**G**reat looks. Top story. Gurn-inducing action. The holy trinity of *Killzone* on PS2 made for a bloody marvellous first-person shooter in which you, a squad of ISA goodies, battled the disenchanted future humans of the Helghast faction.

This time out, your fight against the Helghast and their ruthless expansionist urges finds you cast in the role of Templar from *Killzone 1*.

This knight in hi-tech armour's battles against Helghast nasties takes on a new perspective as the whole game is played out in a third-person view (see 'Exchange of Views'), meaning you can

see the enemy AI in action and act accordingly. And that usually means firing off rockets and other projectiles - including a crossbow with exploding arrows (is that standard issue?) - while laughing manically.

With Vekta still not free from the Helghast, who took a mighty kicking but refused to roll over and die (a la Liverpool's European Cup Final performance last season), a new general, Martec is kicking off. Under the leadership of this nasty loon, the war is starting to swing back in the Helghast's favour and now they're even going so far as nabbing hostages. As a result your dual tasks are liberating the world and freeing the captured innocents before Martec's cronies fry you friends' meat-and-two-veg and use them in decorative sculpture.

The game's designers are promising an emphasis on shorter, snappier missions as a crucial part of *Killzone PSP's* appeal, meaning you should have enough time on the bus to play a meaningful chunk of action without losing track of the unfolding plot.

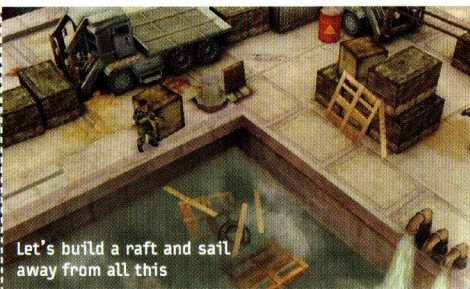
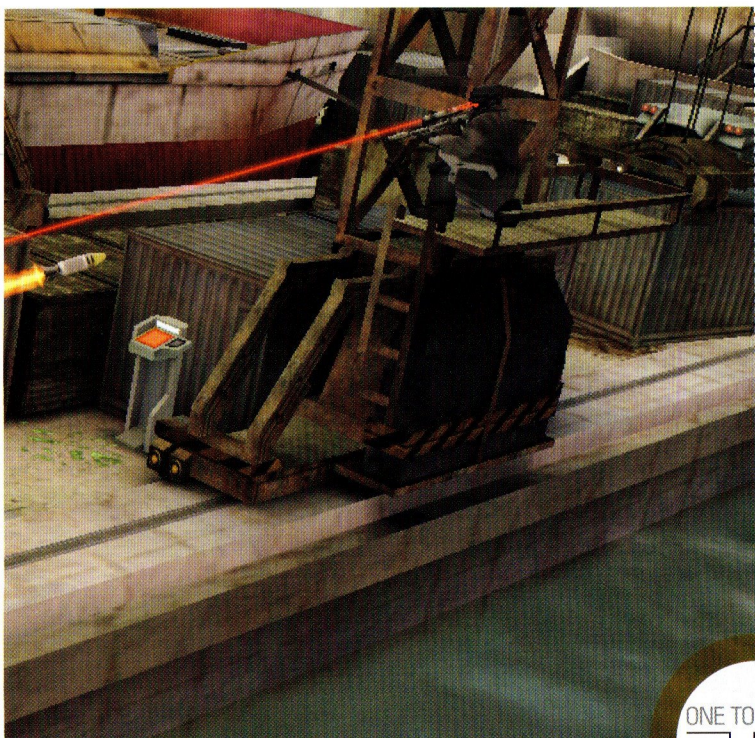
In all, *Killzone: Liberation* is shaping up as a brainier, less frantic version of its gorgeous big sister. Precise details of the new weapons and promised new environments remain sketchy however - those cads at Guerilla sure like to tease us.

That said, if there's no WiFi multiplayer mode dripping with action and reviving characters from *Killzone PS2* then blast us off to Vekta and we'll eat our armoured helmets. ■



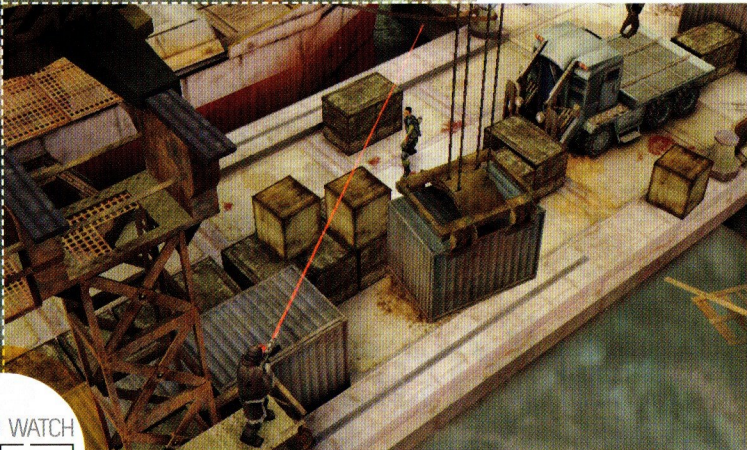
Using the telescopic sight at point-blank range? You're probably due a visit to the opticians



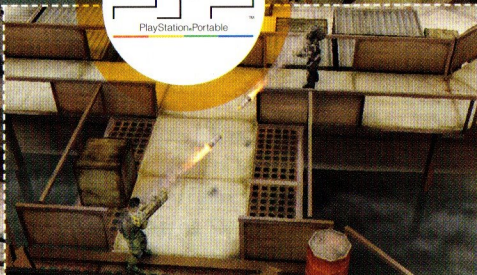


Let's build a raft and sail away from all this

I'm here to clean your pool, mate - quit with the damn laser already...



ONE TO WATCH  
PlayStation Portable



Big mistake to take on a whole battalion armed only with a Quasar laser gun



## EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

The first thing fans of *Killzone* PS2 will notice in the PSP screenshots is that the first-person camera angle has been ditched in favour of a third-person view. And with good reason.

Mathijs de Jonge, the game's director, says the team wanted *Killzone: Liberation* to be the best game for PSP. With this in mind they felt the third-person view was best suited to a handheld screen.

More importantly, the new view adds a subtle tactical layer to proceedings as you can see all the action in your vicinity. Now you'll be able to analyse the movements of your foes and you'll have to make snap judgements on who to tackle first, as well as how.

Looking for a mindless shooter? This ain't it, but if you're looking for a genuine tactical action game, *Liberation* is shaping up to fit the bill like an ammo clip slots into an AK47. Oooh.



This is how cricket bats will look in the 27th Century



The multi-level landscapes are well-furnished with cover





Sheesh - he can talk, but he can't write?



# Talkman

Proving that it's good to talk, man

The talking blue bird has 3,000 phrases under his wing in French, Spanish, Italian, German, Japanese and even English



**H**ow often have your lusty holiday ambitions ended in disaster after a language barrier has forced you to mime 'do you fancy a drink?' to a foreign lady? That's because the International gesture you're looking for is worryingly similar to the symbol for 'You're an alcoholic and I'm guessing you're so drunk you'll snog anything'.

Enter: *Talkman*, Sony's ingenious new boost to internationalism, which translates your

● **Genre:** Erm... unique ● **Publisher:** Sony  
● **Developer:** Sony ● **Release:** May  
● **Website:** [www.yourpsp.com](http://www.yourpsp.com)

rantings into an on-screen interpretation uttered by Max. This talking blue bird has 3,000 phrases under his wing in French, Spanish, Italian, German, Japanese and even English.

Simply plug in the microphone which comes with the game and start gabbing, then you can use *Talkman* as an interactive phrase book. You'll be able to get the message across by repeating Max's screeches and warbles, or by brandishing your PSP screen at a bemused Spanish hotelier and making desperate, panicked eyes.

When you're done saying, you can start playing. The Pronunciation game invites you to wrap your tongue around tricky phrases, while the Listening Game challenges you to correctly identify a raft of foreign language phrases.

A raft of other functions are designed to turn your *Talkman*-enabled PSP into the ultimate travel companion. You can, for instance, record a crucial address or street name so you can play it back to a taxi driver while six sheets to the wind to ensure you reach your destination in one piece.

And with evil ingenuity, you can set your alarm to go off in *Talkman* mode so you have to correctly identify a translated phrase to switch it off. And apparently, slurring, "just five more minutes..." won't do the trick. ■



An essential British holidaymaker's phrase. I think he's saying, "I want to cut your eyes out with a spoon"

An 'A' to impress the chicks.







# SAMURAI WARRIORS



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March 24

What's your style? Try them all with 19 warriors dressed to kill, enhanced strategy, all new scenarios, and multiplayer challenges for up to 4 players.

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You'll spend plenty of time legging it out to islands, buying gear, and smuggling it back to Miami, all the while avoiding the Drugs Enforcement agency

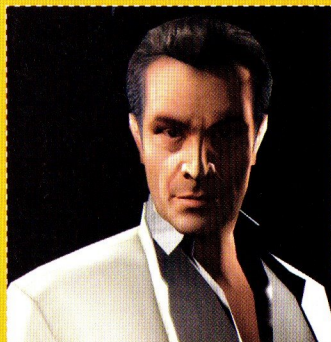


A neighbourly dispute about an overgrown hedge got dangerously out of hand.

# Scarface: The World Is Yours

Take over the world, chico - and everything that's in it

● **Genre:** Action ● **Publisher:** Vivendi  
● **Developer:** Radical Entertainment ● **Release:** TBC  
● **Website:** [www.scarfacegame.com](http://www.scarfacegame.com)



## WELCOME TO HOLLYWOOD

Aside from the likeness of Al Pacino, *Scarface: The World Is Yours* is teaming with Tinsel Town talent. Steven Bauer, who played Manny in the original movie, and Robert Loggia, who played Frank Lopez, reprise their roles for the game.

The cast also includes James Woods, Miguel Sandoval, Robert Davi, Michael Rappaport and Michael York as well as comedians Jay Mohr and Cheech Marin.

The plot has been penned by David McKenna, who wrote the movies *Blow* and *American History X*, so don't expect this to be a rib-tickling kids game...

In other words *TWII* has been designed with a filmic edge that's aimed at capturing the hearts of movie buffs and presenting gamers with a polished, immersive experience. We can't wait.

**T**he original Al Pacino movie, written by Oliver Stone, struck a seminal keynote for the gangster genre and has been imitated on the big screen and in videogames ever since.

Now *Scarface* is set to darken our PSP screens with its grimy themes of mob violence and organised crime. In it you play Tony Montana - represented by a true likeness of gravel-voiced god Al Pacino himself - out to pose your bid to rule the mean streets of Miami.

Tony's a nasty piece of work who doggedly pursues the American Dream of conspicuous consumption and easy living with dirty money, obtained through drug deals and behaviour general frowned upon by the Church.

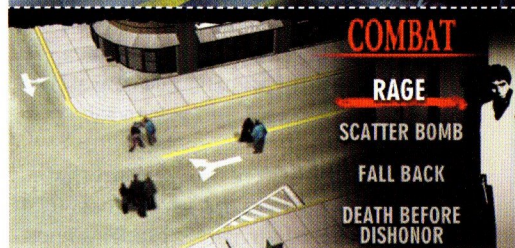
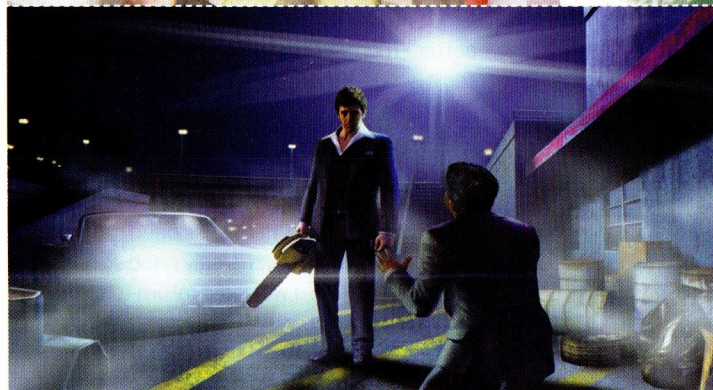
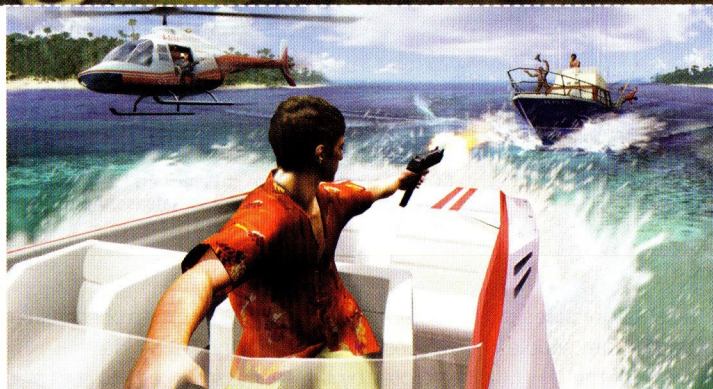


The game opens with the epic shoot-out that closes the original movie, and delves into the continuing plot of Tony who narrowly survives said bloodbath. Your first job is to begin rebuilding the empire that crumbled in the story of the film. To do so you must get to work in the vice-addled 1980s city, and its surrounding islands. Your mission is to buy and sell drugs at a profit, ultimately aiming to take over four areas and crowning yourself the King of Miami.

The vibe of the game will be familiar to *GTA* fans. You'll spend plenty of time at the helm of speedboats, legging it out to islands, buying gear, and smuggling it back into Miami, all the while avoiding the Drugs Enforcement Agency and pirates hot on your tail. Once the cash starts rolling in, however, you can start bankrolling an entourage of henchmen, buy guns and snap up a car showroom of fancy motors. And don't expect to go around nicking wheels like a common hoodlum - you're a high-profile gangster after all...

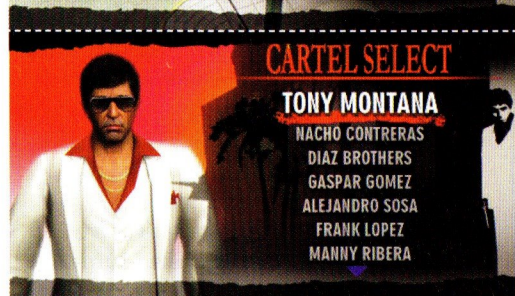
PSP exclusive content is yet to be unveiled, but we're expecting WiFi multiplayer gang-warfare to head-up a list of lures for us handheld gamers. One thing we can say for sure is that those with queasy turns should look elsewhere - *Scarface* will feature blown off limbs, gruesome shoot-outs and, of course, there's the ever-controversial drug-running theme. Shoot and drive well and you'll even unlock a frenzied attack mode by building up your Balls metre. When your bar's flashing, Tony will, quite literally, go nuts... ■





**COMBAT**  
**RAGE**  
 SCATTER BOMB  
 FALL BACK  
 DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR

The bad guys would go to any lengths to get their hands on Tony's stylish Hawaiian shirt (above). A menu. I'll have the Rage Au Vin with Potatoes Scatterbomb, please (Left)

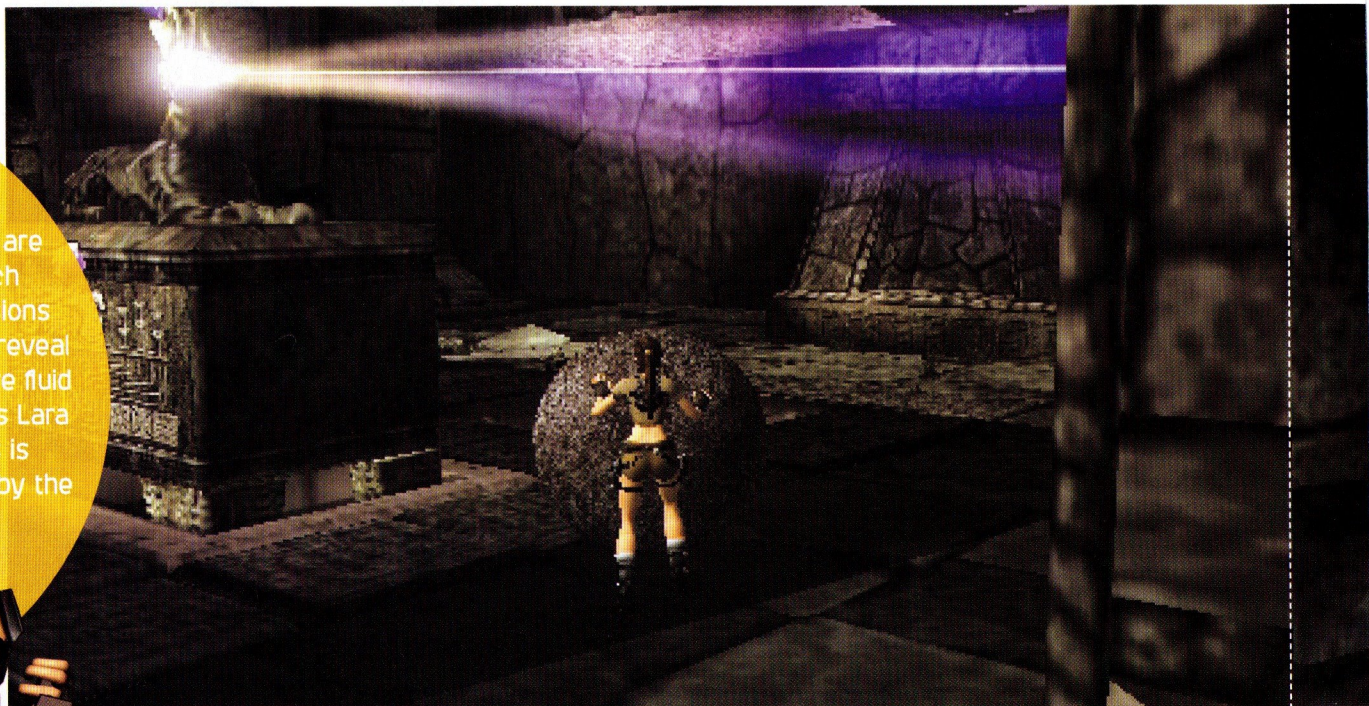


**CARTEL SELECT**  
**TONY MONTANA**  
 NACHO CONTRERAS  
 DIAZ BROTHERS  
 GASPAR GOMEZ  
 ALEJANDRO SOSA  
 FRANK LOPEZ  
 MANNY RIBERA





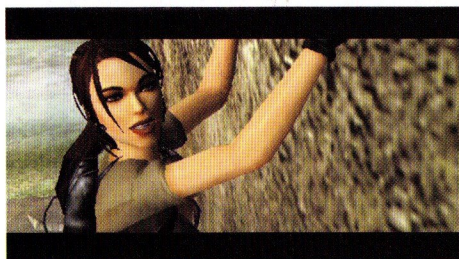
The controls are all-new, which preview versions of the game reveal to be far more fluid than previous Lara outings - this is her seventh by the way.



# Tomb Raider Legend

Heroine chick returns with a vow you'll have a Jolie good time

● **Genre:** Action adventure ● **Publisher:** Eidos  
● **Developer:** Crystal Dynamics ● **Release:** April 7  
● **Website:** [www.tombraider.com](http://www.tombraider.com)



Shades of *Mission Impossible* as Lara answers the blower while clinging to a rock.

**L**et's be frank. The *Tomb Raider* series went off the boil after the first couple of games. As the novelty of the innovative filmic design and heart-quickenning themes of adventure wore off, the faffy controls and sometimes annoying puzzles started getting on our threepennys. Now, it seems, the legend is about to be reborn.

Lara returns - looking far more like Hollywood alter ego Angelina Jolie it has to be said - for *TR*: *L* firing dual pistols of promise - in one hand there's a return to old themes complemented in the other by a revamp of crucial gameplay elements.

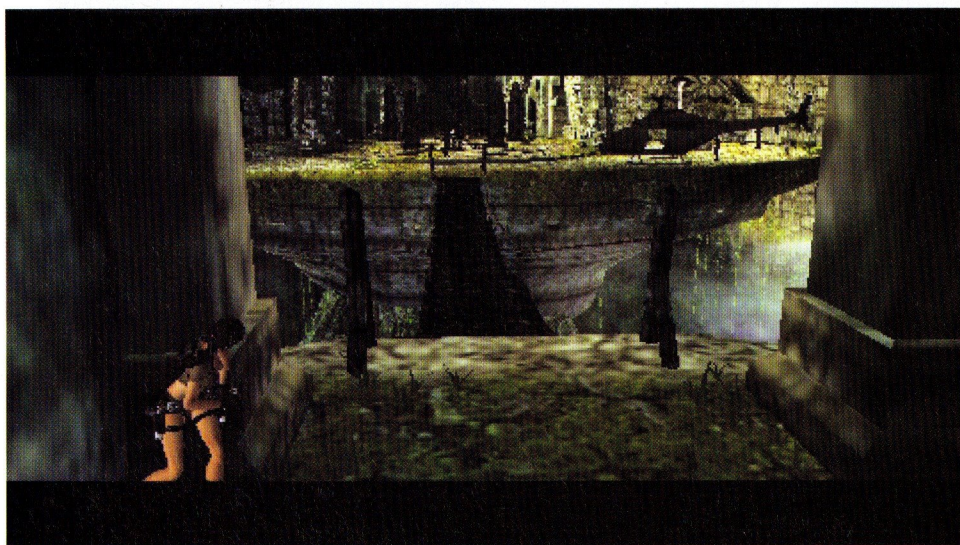
The game kicks off in Bolivia with our heroine on a quest of self-discovery that's rudely interrupted by ill-meaning sorts keen to see Lara acquainted with the inside of a tomb a little better - men who answer to Lara's nemesis, spoilt scoundrel James Rutland Jr.

And so begins an adventure which is focused far more on solving puzzles (and not, thankfully, those of the 'find the hidden lever' nature) than shoot-outs. It remains to be seen if the 'wow' factor of the original game has been reborn, but the signs are tiddler-warmingly good so far.

So, apart from a welcome return to old themes, what's new? Well, the controls for starters, which preview versions of the game reveal to be far more fluid than previous Lara outings (this is her seventh by the way). She moves more responsively to your actions, a superior repertoire of animations hinting at the right time to hit the jump button in tricky situations.

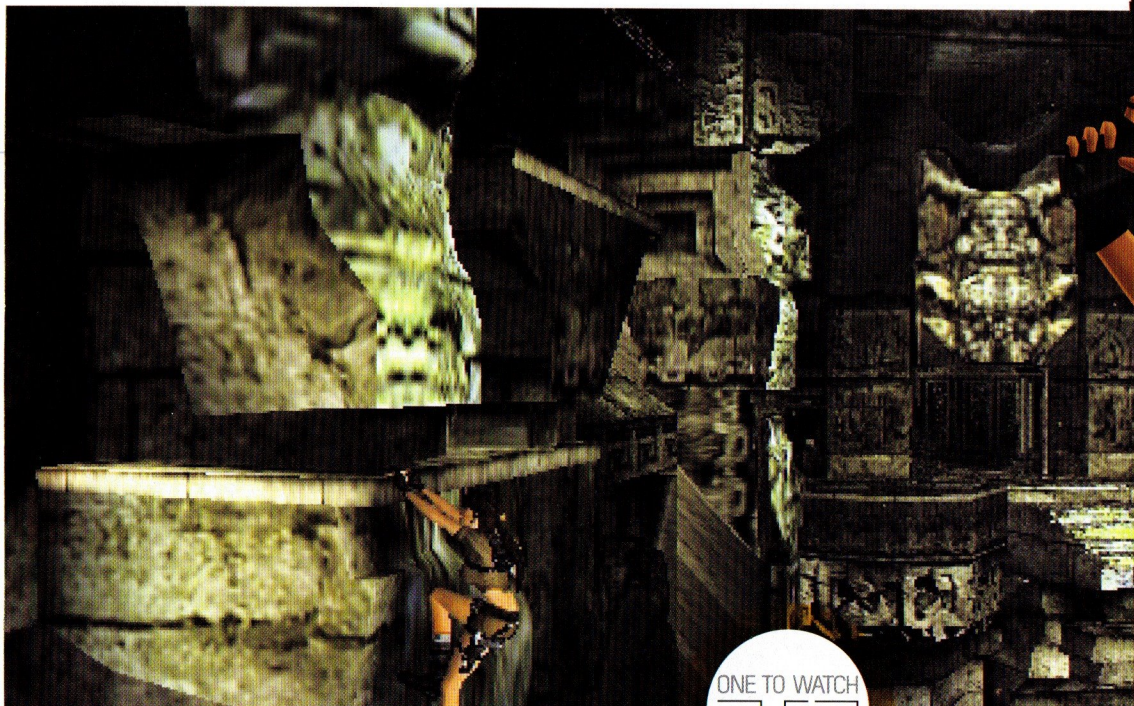
On top of that a raft of new gadgetry that - shock! - actually looks useful. A new chest torch is complemented by a magnetic grabbling hook and our favourite toy, Read Analyse Display binoculars which give vital info on distant terrain to help you plot your way through atmospheric caverns and gulleys.

Best of all, cheeky Lara has tucked a couple of special treats in her napsack for the PSP version of this 3D adventure. Special PSP multiplayer modes and bonus features are promised, but are yet to be unveiled. We're smelling WiFi action, and boy it honks good... ■

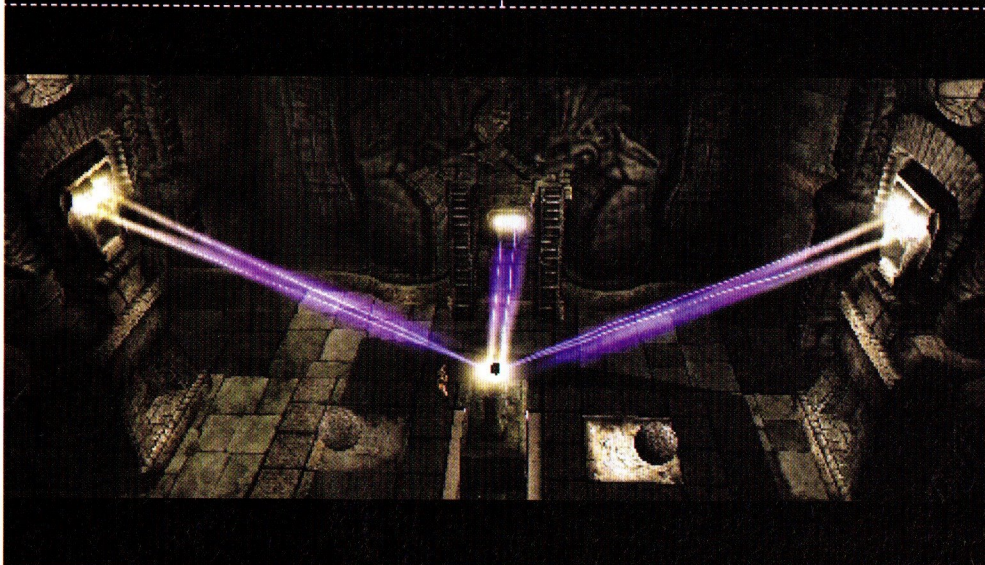
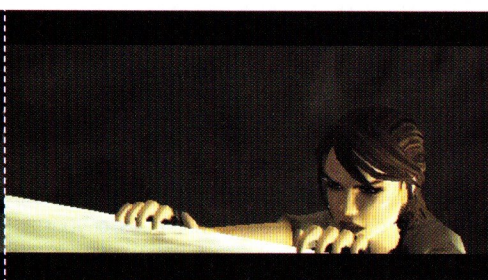
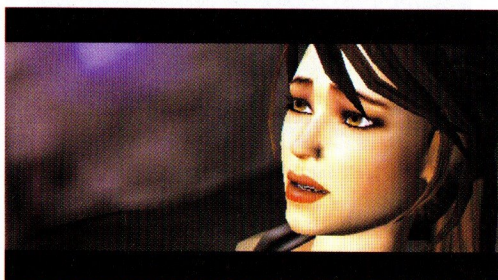
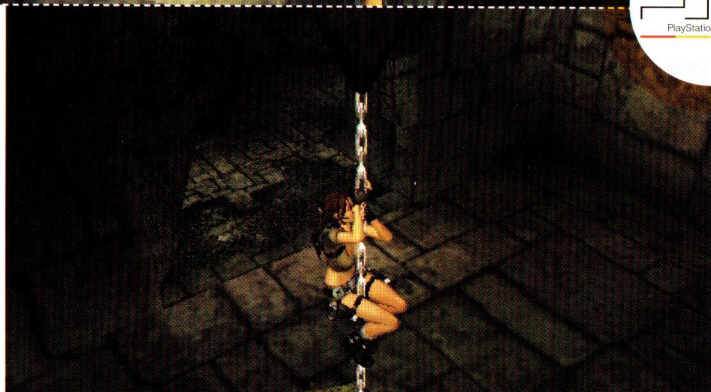


How can I get across the bridge without him noticing I've forgotten to put trousers on?





That svelte frame is rekindling old passions (above). *Legend* features some of *Tomb Raider*'s most detailed interactive scenery yet (left). Climb up there... are you yanking my chain? (bottom left). Lara gets caught short somewhere in the labyrinth (below)



*Legend* harks back to the good-time puzzling of old (below) A terrifying flashback as Lara remembers *Tomb Raider: The Angel Of Darkness* (top left) Do you know Chopsticks? (top right)



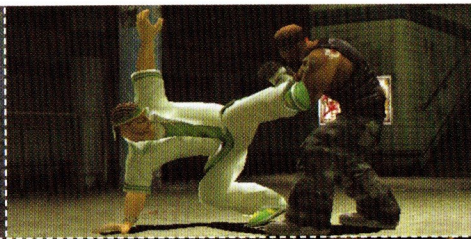
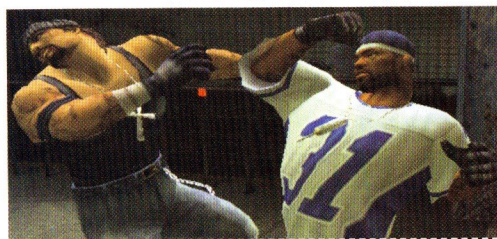
## SHUT YOUR TRAP

They're the bane of her existence, and in previous *Tomb Raider* games they've been a pain in the neck (quite literally on some occasions), but traps are back for *Legend*. Traps, that is, with a difference.

Instead of having to leg it out of the road of falling debris, sprint off crumbling ledges or dodge *Indiana Jones*-style boulders, you'll have to time a button press to successfully escape a fate worse than life - death.

It's hardly a new idea, but the technique boosts a Lara who was starting to look a little deflated. These action events trigger subtle and expressive animations that reinforce the lithe athleticism of our heroine, as opposed to your own jerky movements which make Croft look more like a constipated stick insect than the female Indiana Jones.





Punch me in the face if you must, but please, don't tear the purple tracksuit (above). "I think I stepped in something on the way to the post office... can you check for me?" (right)



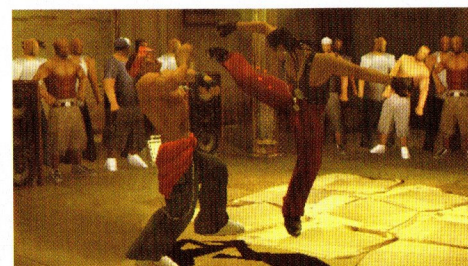
# Def Jam Fight For NY: The Takeover

At last! The sequel to Goldie Lookin' Chain's Cardiff Takedown

● Genre: Fighting ● Publisher: EA  
● Developer: Aki Corp ● Release: March 27  
● Website: www.ea.com

**T**here are times when gaming goes in a pretty unexpected direction. Take, for example, *Def Jam Fight for New York: The Takeover*, a prequel to PS2 fight fest *Def Jam Vendetta*, in which you play as your favourite rapper busting some kick-ass moves and fighting for control of the New York underground.

All of your favourite Def Jam artists are here: Busta Rhymes, Redman, Snoop and, for some reason, Carmen Electra. Should you feel inclined you can dress up these hip-hop gods, or your own self-built character, in a variety of urbanwear from the likes of Rocawear, Sean "P Diddy" John and Reebok.



Dude, this isn't Saturday Night Fever

Once you've dressed to kill you can choose from five combat styles - kickboxing, wrestling, street fighting, martial arts, or submissions - in a game that promises varied action, thanks to these conflicting fighting styles.

Fans of the series and those who enjoy viciously balletic combat in general will be thrilled to learn of new 'mount' moves. These happily enable you to bash your opponents repeatedly around the head until they manage to throw you off or, not unrealistically, they are rendered out for the count and don't bother getting back up for more.

And if the central story doesn't appeal then your community-spirited PSP will allow you to grapple your friends wirelessly, via 1-on-1 wireless deathmatch gaming.

Online there are sixty characters and twenty arenas - including four PSP exclusives - so old dawgs and new Gs alike should find plenty to enjoy here. Those with a particular interest in the sonic side of hip-hop will enjoy the impressive soundtrack too. Fo' shizzle. ■



Your community spirited PSP will allow you to grapple your friends wirelessly via 1-on-1 deathmatch



TimberLand-style boots appear to go for very attractive sums on the footwear black market



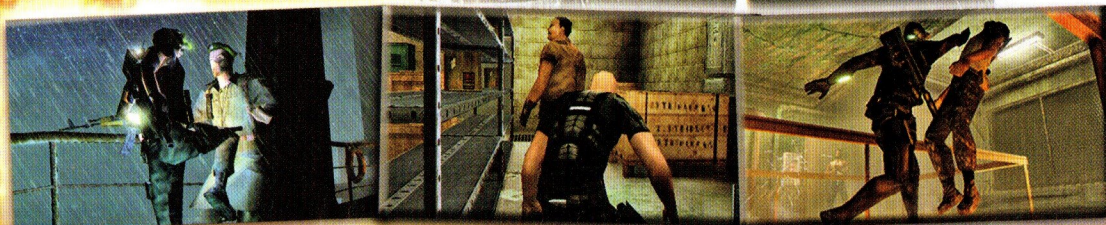
Ubisoft presents Sam Fisher's Spy Thriller

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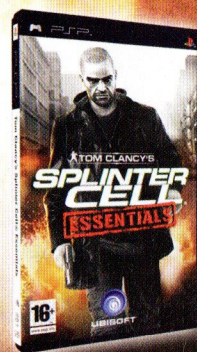
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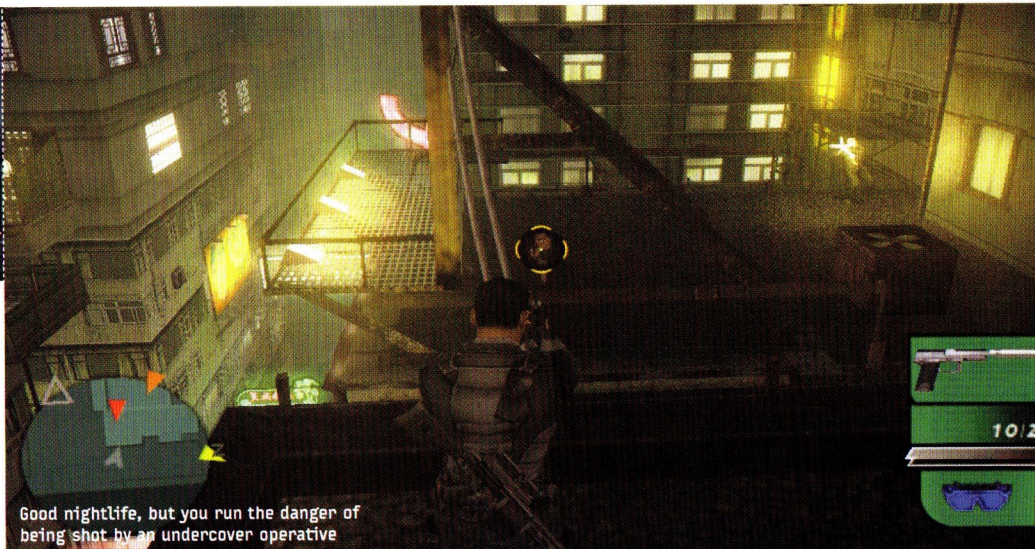
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Even a man called Gabe can't miss from here



Good nightlife, but you run the danger of being shot by an undercover operative

# Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror

Logan runs on to PSP and not even the President knows he's here

● Genre: Action ● Publisher: Sony  
● Developer: Sony ● Release: TBC  
● Website: [www.yourpsp.com](http://www.yourpsp.com)

You'll be able to quickly identify the general state of alertness of patrolling guards, who will be either idle, curious or alarmed

**H**ow we wished we had a dark mirror to hide our horrendous visages. Luckily, *Syphon Filter* has nothing to be ashamed of in the looks stakes, as it's one of the prettiest games on PSP.

The Dark Mirror here is a weapon of mass destruction which you, as undercover operative Gabe Logan, must discover and destroy through a series of covert missions that will get you plenty of stamps in your passport and test your

nerve to melting point.

That's the theory, anyway.

Those with long memories and a few gaming wrinkles should remember with no little fondness Mr Logan's third-person exploits way back in the original PSone days. That blend of stealth, epic gun action, and varied mission goals, woven together through a rich and engaging plot, looks to have been remixed here with a PSP twist.

Meanwhile, a raft of new items of kit has been added that should prove enough to bring a tear to tech-lovers' eyes, not to mention the blinkers of enemies scouted through Gabe's new vision-enhancing goggles and on the receiving end of deadly darts.

That said, capping enemies looks set to be a little trickier in *Dark Mirror*. AI has reportedly been ramped up to provide a greater challenge, especially for those of us keen to try a bit of sneakery. It's lucky, then, that to even things up a little, you'll be able to quickly identify the general state of alertness of patrolling guards, who will be either idle ('Zzzzzz'), curious ('What the f-?') or alarmed ('He's here! He's here! Kill him!').

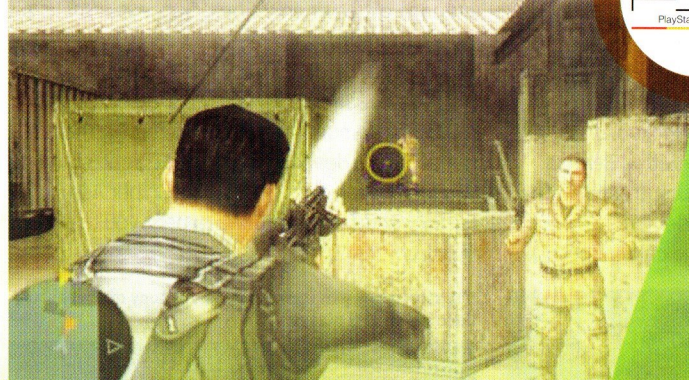
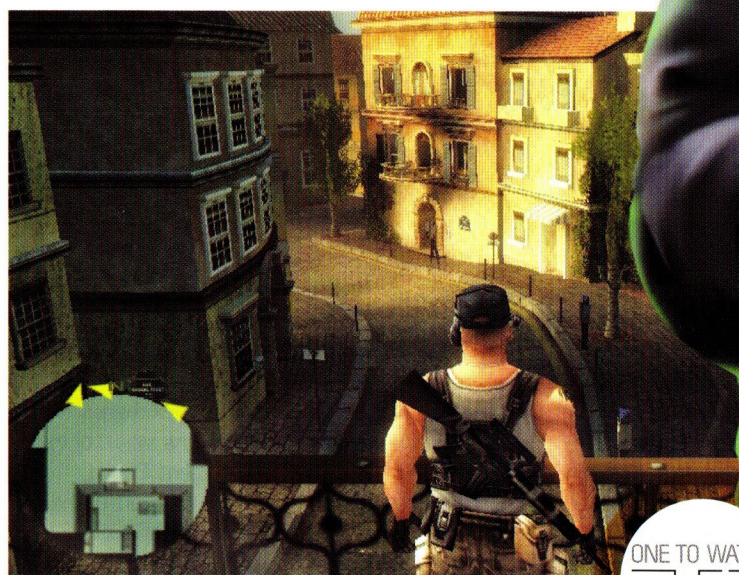
Each of the mission have been sprinkled with secret items that will unlock the usual clutch of extras, plus a full-length bonus mission for those still wondering quite what the hell happened at the end of *Omega Strain*, Gabe's last outing on PlayStation 2.

Those who prefer to look forward will be delighted to learn that our early shuffties at the game have been most promising. Great visuals and varied gameplay, from tentative tip-toeing to turret gunnery, should only be topped by the brilliant, teeth-chattering taser weapon. Watch and laugh, sadists, as your enemies dance before you... ■



"Can't we just sit down with a nice cuppa and talk this through?" (top). I bet Lara never has to do this (left). You don't scare me, ominously gathering fireball (right)





Undercover as a very camp clubber (top). Do you think they've seen me? (middle). Oh no General, khaki cammo is so last spring... (bottom)



## FRIENDLY FIRE

A PSP game without a multiplayer mode is like Paris Hilton with trousers on - just wrong. The WiFi gaming in *Syphon Filter*, however, deserves a medal for its depth and ingenuity.

Enabling up to eight players to go head-to-head over four game modes, taking in the usual deathmatch variants plus a couple of neater options. Objective modes require a team to destroy specific targets or nick an item and move it to a designated area, while the other team tries to stop them.

Better still, the Rogue Agent multiplayer game makes one person the object of all the other's enmity when they grab some files off another player. The result is a game of tag with deadly consequences.

The icing on the cake for *SF* multiplayer is a ranking system which chooses squad leaders according to their experience and ability online and rewards players with upgrades, such as better medikits, for good performances.





Damn tourist choppers, spoiling my village. Take that!



# James Bond 007 From Russia With Love

This is your moment, your perfect moment with Bond

● Genre: Shooter ● Publisher: EA  
● Developer: EA Redwood Studios ● Release: March  
● Website: [www.ea.com](http://www.ea.com)

**M**r Bond, we've been expecting you... to turn up on PSP. But less predictable (than that intro) is the fact this isn't simply a straight port of the retro action shooter for PlayStation 2.

The core gameplay, which casts you as Connery's Bond in a remake of the 60s film, is a feast of third-person shooting and outlandish gadgetry. You'll get your loving hands on a helicopter and the infamous FRWL jet-pack, as well as tasty widgets such as a laser watch and serum gun.

Plus, there are a few new gameplay gadgets to play with in this PSP version. As well as exclusive bonus modes and unlockables you get to prove your deadly accuracy with a Beretta, and an arsenal of other weapons, thanks to the new, sniper-friendly Focus mode.

This filmic facility zooms the camera onto a

target and enables you to land a pinpoint shot on your foe. Imagine the joy of blasting a shooter out of your enemy's hand before you cap him between the eyes...

For those with a Bond complex there's every incentive to play the game in the mould of the world's most deadly secret agent. Bond moments, accompanied by a few bars of the iconic theme tune, are activated by pulling off particularly impressive feats, such as shooting a grenade off an enemy's belt. Success unlocks a famous face from the rogue's gallery of 007's arch villains.

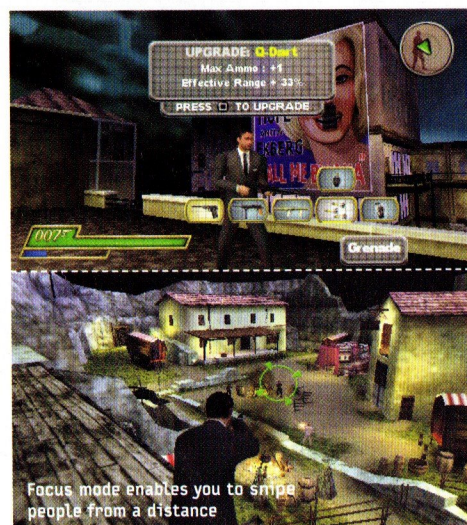
These baddies can be used in an expanded multi-player mode as you battle through death match, team death match and last man standing wireless dust-ups in the Venice, Sniper Alley, Factory and Train levels. We expect you to die, Mr Bond. Lots. And lots. ■

I'll take every gun you've got. And a copy of Dirty Dancing on VHS please

You'll get your hands on a helicopter and the infamous FRWL jet-pack, as well as tasty widgets such as a laser watch and serum gun



The indoor jetpack: one to file next to the inflatable dartboard and chocolate teapot in Q's storeroom of rubbish inventions



Focus mode enables you to snipe people from a distance





After a long night of pulling wheel-spins in the car-park, the Chavmobile finally exploded (left). Duck pond successfully destroyed, now attacking the garden sheds, sir (below)

# Field Commander

Puny landscapes tremble as you pull out the biggest of all the big guns



**I**gnore the agricultural-themed name - *Field Commander* is more about killing fields than crop rotation. It casts you as a battlefield general waging war against a nasty outfit of terrorists who are destabilising global peace with their horrid warmongering.

Wiping this threat off the Earth looks like a pleasingly violent affair as you instruct land, sea and air units to engage and destroy enemies

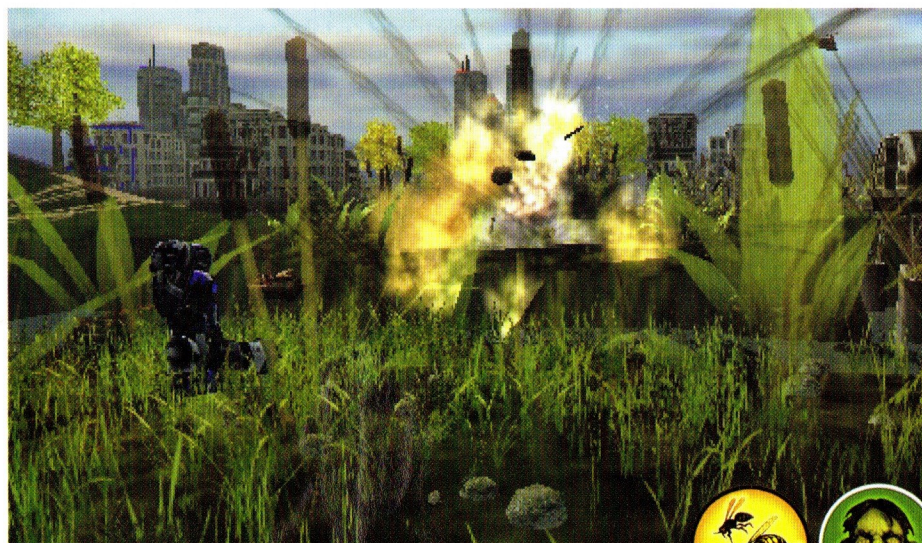
● **Genre:** Turn-based strategy ● **Publisher:** Ubisoft  
● **Developer:** SOE ● **Release:** April  
● **Website:** [www.fieldcommandergame.com](http://www.fieldcommandergame.com)

with enough firepower to turn the 30 single player levels into piles of steaming rubble.

The action here is turn-based, so you needn't worry about scurrying around the battlefield to instruct units you forgot were left out on the limb. Instead you can plot the strategy of up to 15 army divisions and watch your tactical genius, (or total ineptitude), play out before you.

Best of all, what we've seen of the game so far suggests you won't need a degree in maths or an intimate knowledge of Sun Tzu's *Art Of War* to enjoy success. It looks worryingly simple to unleash hell on your opponents at the click of a button. The graphics are crisp and peppered with 3D effects, and they front a gameplay experience we reckon could really come to life in multiplayer mode, in which you can challenge rival Napoleons to a WiFi scrap.

What's more, even if you don't fancy creating levels with the special edit mode, you can always remodel the existing ones thanks to weapons including stealth bombers and lethal warheads. In other words, *Field Commander* is shaping up to be the perfect game for George Bush megalomaniacs and weekend warriors alike. Just don't turn up in a tractor. ■



Yes! I think I got their snowman!







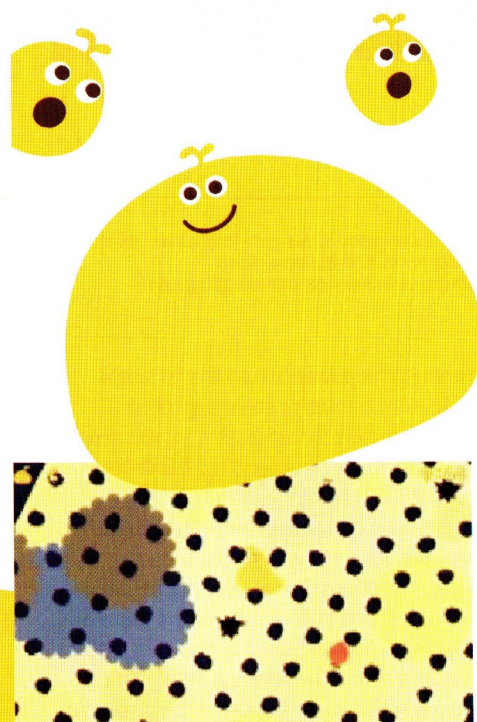
Get so big and you'll be able to munch all-comers. It's so weird, it MUST be clever

# Loco Roco

Something a little loco to drive you crazy...



● **Genre:** Action puzzler ● **Publisher:** Sony  
● **Developer:** Sony ● **Release:** TBC  
● **Website:** [www.mypsp.com](http://www.mypsp.com)



**S**ometimes simple, pretty things are the best - and we're not talking about girl bands either. Take *Loco Roco*, for instance. The sublimely straightforward premise of this Japanese-developed game is that you don't move your character, you move the entire world...

It works like this: using your PSP shoulder buttons, tilt the entire landscape to set an orange blob (aka you) rolling and tumbling about some mental, vibrantly coloured environments. Find the exit and you've beaten the level. Dead simple. (You reckon).

When your Tango-coloured alter ego encounters scenery and enemies, it'll respond in one of two ways. If it's bigger than the foreign bodies it'll swallow them and expand in size. If he gets unmanageably large, hit 'x' to split him into a team of mini-blobs, and reform your mass by holding 'x' - a trick that's ideal for negotiating



It's orange and blob-like. Luckily, Noel Edmonds was nowhere to be seen

narrow passages or slipping past enemies.

On the other hand, if our tangerine-like hero encounters larger enemies, a piece of blob is torn away and the character shrinks along with its energy bar. Luckily you can also press the shoulder buttons together to make him jump to avoid enemies or make leaps across dangerous chasms. Hurrah!

As gameplay progresses, you'll find you can only trigger certain levers when you've ballooned in size and weight, opening up ever-juicier puzzle elements - all of which bodes well for the finished article. After all, if the game's as deep as it is innovative and intriguing, you could be gawping at the next big thing on PSP. Truly, this blob could be bound for big things. ■

When your Tango-coloured alter-ego encounters scenery and enemies, it'll swallow them and expand in size

Blob occasionally moonlighted as a basketball



"Brilliant," said Blob, "The family's here to visit"





# Mega Man Powered Up

The Blue Bomber rides again in this PSP re-imagining

● **Genre:** Action/Platform ● **Publisher:** Capcom  
● **Developer:** Capcom ● **Release:** March 24  
● **Website:** [www.capcom.com](http://www.capcom.com)



**A**fter almost twenty years of saving the planet Mega Man is brought out of the mothballs again to frustrate the evil plans of nemesis Dr Wily. Having undergone a complete redesign for the PSP, *Mega Man Powered Up* showcases new bosses and puzzles to master, restyling the original for the 21st century.

The (Mega) Man himself has had something akin to a makeover, with a graphical style that allows for recognisable emotions to play across

MM's outsized face. While the game is still a 2D scroller in the gameplay stakes, characters are rendered in high-resolution 3D, with cut scenes featuring new animations, revamped soundtracks and character voices.

You'll have the option of playing the new versions of the levels, with varied item placements and different tactics required for negotiating obstacles and acquiring power-ups, or sticking to the original level design layout.

Another feature that should have fans salivating is the option to play as any one of the eight boss robots - two of which are new - each with their own set of characteristics and abilities. And, to round things off, there are 100 mini-game style levels with their own objectives.

A major lure of *Powered Up* is the Infrastructure Mode, which enables you to create your own levels and share them online, or download levels created by other Powered Up users. Practically everything in the editor is customisable, from music to enemy and object placement.

*Powered Up* looks anything but a lazy port, and the UMD looks to be bursting with bonus material. Only problem is, our hero could do with a new name. Who says Mega these days? It's so last century. How about Giga Man? ■



Hmm. Sharp, pointy sticks. Probably best to jump over them (top). Despite the 3D graphics gameplay remains resolutely 2D (right)







SpongeBob explores another nether region in Bikini Bottom.



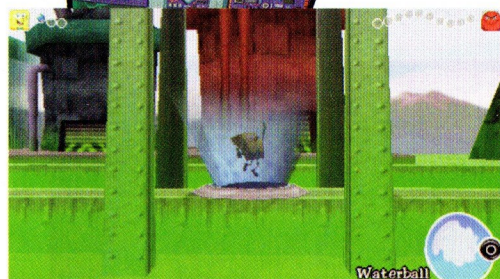
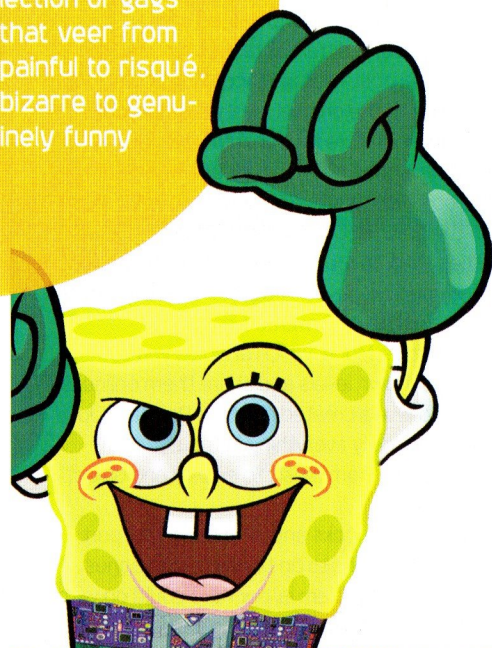
Home, sweet pineapple

# SpongeBob SquarePants: The Yellow Avenger

He might be spongy and square,  
but he's not pants.

● **Genre:** Action ● **Publisher:** THQ  
● **Developer:** Tantalus ● **Release:** March 24  
● **Website:** [www.thq.com](http://www.thq.com)

The game captures the anarchic spirit of the TV show, throwing in a collection of gags that veer from painful to risqué, bizarre to genuinely funny



SpongeBob charges up with special powers (above). The interactive environments and cast of characters are a treat for Squarepants fans (right)

**S**oon arriving on a PSP under the sea, *The Yellow Avenger* is based on the insanely popular *SpongeBob SquarePants* cartoon, a programme apparently beloved of both kids and adults alike.

The Super Villain Twenty Year Reunion has come to the idyllic underwater paradise of Bikini Bottom, and our favourite absorbent protagonist must rescue his superhero chums Mermaid Man and Barnacle Boy from the nefarious clutches of The Dirty Bubble to restore order to the ocean-floor. With the aid of a superhero belt you'll battle the dastardly Bubble with special powers such as Summon Sea Creatures, Sulphur Vision and Super Super Strength.

Like most entries in the TV crossover genre, gameplay is typically adventure-orientated, centering around exploring Bikini Bottom and conversing with its colourful, crazed inhabitants.

Various tasks and puzzles will be uncovered

by your investigations, and a series of confrontations with mini-Bubbles ensue.

Just like the TV show, the game seems to have been designed by a toddler on tartrazine, and the 3D environment and character voices promise to be engaging and amusing.

The appeal of *SpongeBob* to the nippers is quite obvious: he's brash, colourful and funny. But look a little deeper and there's more than a suggestion of surrealist humour and some mild, but cheeky, innuendo that should appeal to an older audience. The game captures the anarchic spirit of the TV show, throwing in a collection of gags that veer from painful to risqué, bizarre to genuinely funny.

Publishers THQ are promising there's enough here for children and adults to enjoy, so it's not hard to imagine grown-ups sneaking a play while the young 'uns are out happy-slapping.

SpongeBob fans will no doubt soak it up. Like, y'know, a sponge. ■





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A few Little Britain catchphrases had them rolling in the aisles

# Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Essentials

Enter the stealthy world of Sam 'Stealth' Fisher

● **Genre:** Third-person action ● **Publisher:** Sony  
● **Developer:** Guerilla ● **Release:** TBC  
● **Website:** [www.yourpsp.com](http://www.yourpsp.com)



That Big Brother live feed will keep them occupied for hours to come...

Finding that room a trifle dark for stealth? Shoot a light out. Too dark? Switch to night vision. Looking for a thermos of hot tea? Thermal vision.



In the world of authors jealousy is rife. On the back of his populist, brick-like novels, Tom Clancy has successfully made the crossover from best-selling author to guy-with-name-on-the-front-of-computer-game. Oddly, despite the best efforts of their authors, Salman Rushdie's *Poolhall Madness* and Clare Rayner's *Colchester Rally Inferno* never caught on.

Lucky, then, that the *Splinter Cell* series is still going strong with this most recent iteration for the PSP, fleshing out the background of protagonist Sam Fisher via flashbacks to missions culled from Fisher's career.

Interestingly, the game will present Sam with tough moral choices, which presumably means something rather weightier than whether to buy free-range or barn eggs. There are nine brand-new story missions here with three past missions

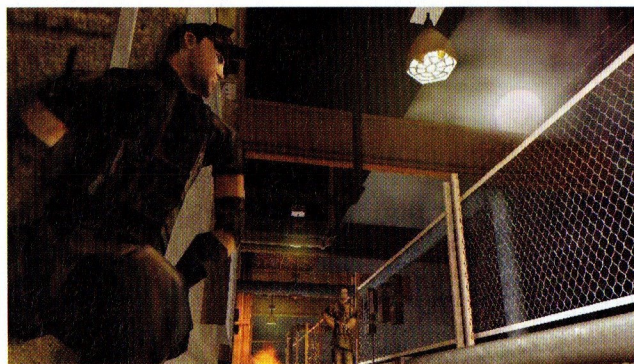
ported from previous games for fanboys who get all nostalgic about their stealth killing.

Graphically the game gives no quarter to the fact that it's designed for a portable device. *Essentials* adapts the PS2's *Pandora Tomorrow* engine to run smoothly on the PSP, with all the series' keynote visuals present and correct. Finding that room a trifle bright for stealth? Shoot a light out. Too dark? Switch to night-vision. Looking for a thermos of hot tea? Thermal vision. Works a treat.

The usual *Splinter Cell* arsenal is, reassuringly, present and correct, with the SC-20K covert assault rifle, complete with accessories such as launcher attachments which allow you to fire a variety of projectiles, from gas grenade to sticky camera.

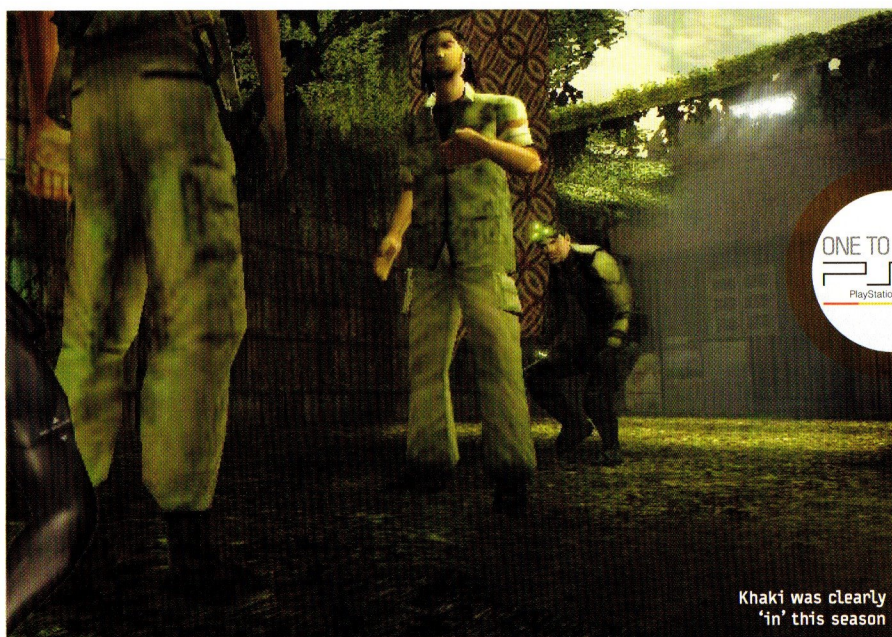
Plus, Fisher's abilities remain intact, so you can creep up on unsuspecting badguys to kill, knock out or interrogate. Alternatively you can use bodies as human shields, or lumber them about over your shoulder to deal with later.

In the gameplay stakes, *Essentials* doesn't differ from the rest of the series, though the changes to accommodate the move to the PSP look to be intuitive and subtle. Missions are slightly different in that you'll receive a series of five-minute tasks to complete, with each map broken down into a number of smaller zones. Multiplayer offers four maps for head-to-head matches in spy versus spy mode, giving you the opportunity to play your chums. Possibly while wearing combat gear. In a tent.

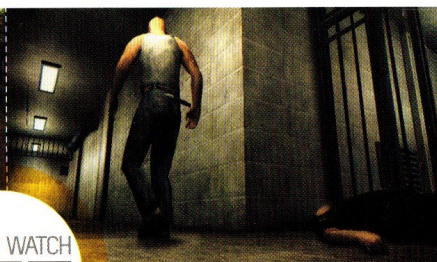


If only I could remember where I put that damn torch

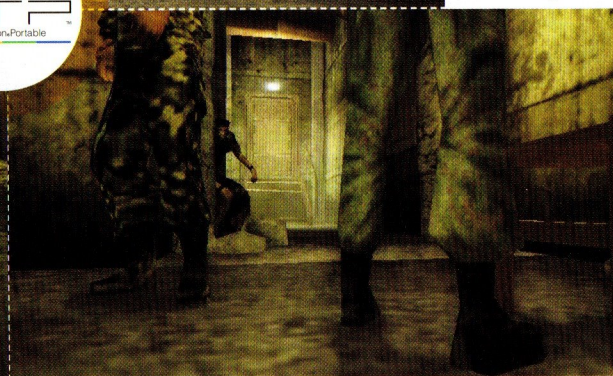




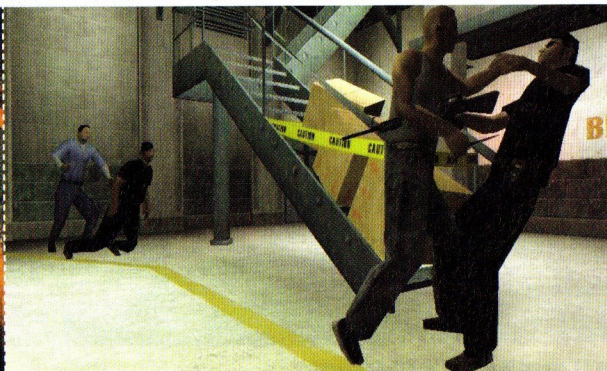
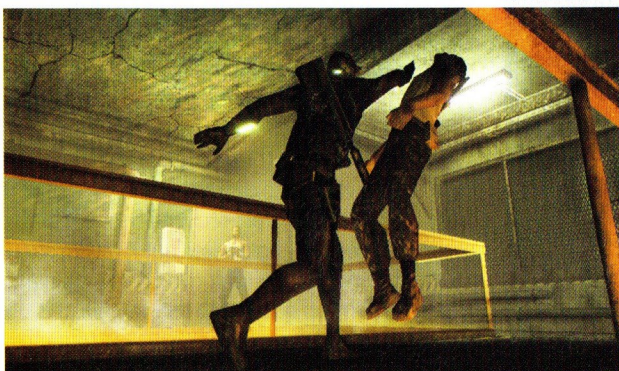
Khaki was clearly  
'in' this season



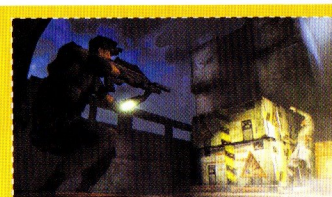
The old 'hiding in  
plain sight' routine  
works every time



Careful use of light and shadow is the key to an unbroken stealth record (above).  
Right, just relax, there's someone at the bottom to catch you (below)



"Say 'Aaaaah'. Oh,  
sorry, I appear to  
have killed you"



## OPTIMISED PRIME

A number of changes from PS2 gameplay are evident, necessitated by the PSP's layout and portable nature, though none of the game's controls have been compromised.

Camera control is still 360-degree, though you'll have to stop to adjust perspective. Holding down the circle button, you can use the analogue stick to move the camera, a quick tap will re-centre the camera behind Sam. All buttons are dual-functional, so no skills are lost in the translation.

Heads-up displays feature a bi-directional sound gauge that'll let you know where sounds are coming from, and how close the source is. The HUD remains otherwise unchanged, showing you how much noise you're making and how well hidden you are.

Most importantly, Essentials gives you the option to save manually, so you can down tools when the missus makes you take the dog for a walk.





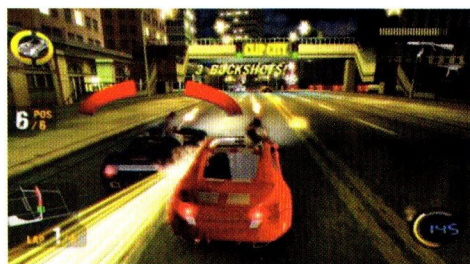
Pimping your ride, decorating your crib, earning respect, and winning the attentions of the honeys are all keys to success

"Say, let's just swap names and addresses and we'll let the insurance people sort it out"

# Street Riders

Get rich or die ridin'

● Genre: Racer/Shooter ● Publisher: Ubisoft  
● Developer: Ubisoft ● Release: March 31  
● Website: www.ubi.com



Hmm... can anyone smell burning?

**D**o you like those missions in the *Grand Theft Auto* series where you shoot at other vehicles while being driven around the streets at high speed? Ever imagine what an entire game based around that premise would be like?

You know the score by now: big guns, fast cars, hot chicks and a dash of post-modernism. You play as Buck, defending your 'OG' (original gangsta, yo) mentor and territory against the

dastardly Cortez in the seedy underworld of LA.

Gameplay involves a series of racing missions that demand dangerous driving at ludicrous speeds through the streets of LA while trying to keep your sights locked onto a rival. Said foe will also be speeding through the metropolis while doing his best to blow your head off. We shouldn't like this sort of thing, but...

All the trimmings of modern gangsterism are present and correct: pimpin' your ride, decorating your crib, earning respect and winning the attentions of the honeys are all key to success. Meanwhile, a multitude of vicious weapons and bitchin' vehicles will help see you through the 66 missions along the way.

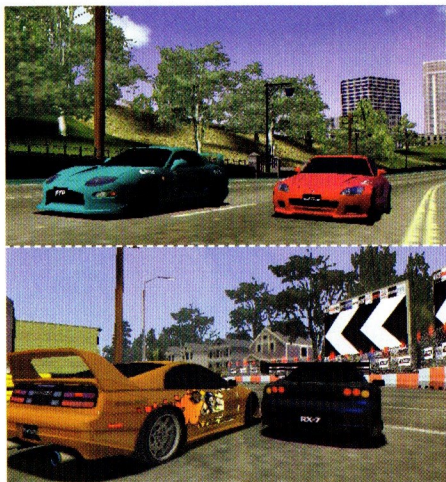
With seven multiplayer modes and a staggering 45 multiplayer missions there's plenty to be enjoyed in terms of replayability as you wirelessly cap your homies. Alternatively online co-operative gaming allows you to create your own teams and take on rivals, if you're feeling a little more friendly.

The kind of game the words 'octane' and 'high' were invented to describe, *Street Riders* looks like classic no-brain-required nonsense. It's not big, it's certainly not clever, but if racers are your thing, and you wouldn't mind throwing in a little shoot-em-up action into the bargain, this genre hybrid is sure to keep all you gun-toting petrolheads entertained. ■



Those ragamuffins have incurred my most profound displeasure!





I'd slow down around this corner if I were you: there's a speed camera in the bush [above] Ah, the stench of burning rubber [right]



## Juiced: Eliminator

Mouth-watering street racer pours a bit of high-speed goodness on to PSP

● Genre: Racing ● Publisher: THQ  
● Developer: Juice Games ● Release: June  
● Website: [www.juiced-racing.com](http://www.juiced-racing.com)



### THINK PINKS

It's the stuff of American high school folklore, but the concept of racing for pinks is central to the potential WiFi connectivity joy of Juiced: Eliminator.

Now you can challenge your siblings, mates - even that bloke on the train who smells funny - to a head-to-head race with the ownership of each of your motors on the line.

Jostling with Pink Slips mode for your multi-player affections are Crew and Eliminator flavoured face-offs, which can be combined to provide extra gaming challenges.

The introduction of crews opens up a raft of brilliant gameplay options for wireless PSP gamers, enabling you to team up with your mates to take on all-comers. Of course, you can always play nice and team up with strangers, but that doesn't sound like you at all...

**T**he street racing genre is looking more crowded than the M6 north on a bank holiday weekend these days. That's largely because tearing up city highways in souped up racers is a lot more fun than edging towards Birmingham in a Ford Focus.

Up near the lead of the pack of urban driving sims on PS2 is *Juiced*. Set in petrol-heads' paradise Angel City, the game invites you to join a crew to vie for kudos and control of the streets. This PSP version, however, is looking even juicier than its big brother.

Their driving ambition is clearly to create the ultimate PSP racing game, harnessing the WiFi connectivity of your handheld honeypot at

every sharp turn - see 'Think Pinks' for more.

New features? Now, the roster of cars goes up to 60, thanks to the addition of nine PSP exclusive vehicles and there are 16 fresh race environments in two new districts of Angel City. Meanwhile, all of the remaining tracks converted from the PS2 version of the game have reportedly been tweaked to offer a fresh challenge on PSP, even for *Juiced* devotees.

Meanwhile, the Eliminator mode, which lends its name to the game's title, is a delicious new prospect. In it the slowest driver on each lap is booted from the race until only one player remains. The tactical possibilities this opens up are fruity indeed. Imagine catching up with the leader on a tight bend and smashing him into the sidings, forcing him to crash and lose time on a vital lap only to eliminate him completely...

A catalogue of other modifications, true to the customisation ethos of the game itself, have been welded onto the handheld *Juiced* too. Pretty new menus will front a progression mode THQ promise is tweaked to perfection, while 100 new body kit tweaks and post race movies add a dash of class to the high-octane cocktail. *Need For Speed* be warned, *Juiced* is on your tail... ■



It's important to keep a well-oiled engine, but this is probably taking things too seriously



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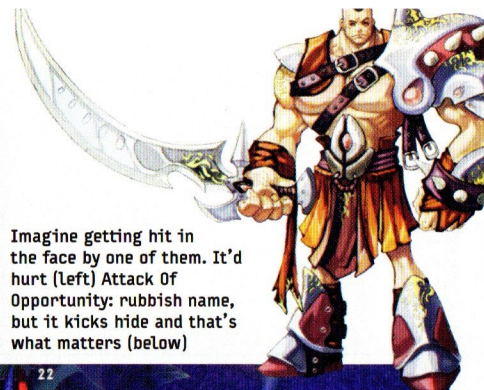
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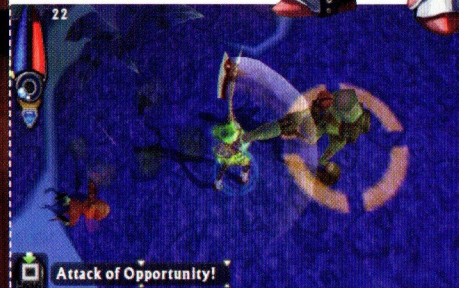
[www.totalfilm.com](http://www.totalfilm.com)







Imagine getting hit in the face by one of them. It'd hurt (left) Attack Of Opportunity: rubbish name, but it kicks hide and that's what matters (below)



# Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code

Great if you fancy a slash, but will you be able to hack it?

● Genre: RPG ● Publisher: Ubisoft  
● Developer: Sony Online Entertainment ● Release: April 7 ● Website: [www.untoldlegends.com](http://www.untoldlegends.com)



If you fancy forming a fellowship and heading off for some adventure, upcoming hack-and-slash RPG *Untold Legends* is shaping up to be as good a PSP dungeon master as you could hope to find.

This follow up to *Brotherhood of the Blade* casts you in multiple fantasy roles - as five

shape-shifting creatures no less - and you're tasked with discovering the truth of a suspected plot to stamp out your entire race.

The game is set in a putrid world of malicious lords whose blood-lusty minions are bent on eating your liver for supper, without even removing it from your body first.

The plot's secondary to the action of a game that throws you into conflict with countless creatures who you can despatch with unfeasible swords and outlandish magic.

There's no doubt the graphics have been ramped up from the first *UL*, with smarter menu screens fronting prettier levels. More importantly, important tweaks have been to the fighting action and multiplayer modes.

New 'attacks of opportunity' enable you to land a killer blow in the thick of the button-mashing, while there looks to be a raft of extra moves and special abilities to aid you in your scuffling.

The addition of a new multiplayer mode allows you to fight four players in a head-to-head-to-head face off or team up with a bearded pal for a campaign that complements the main game. Hopefully we'll be complimenting *Untold Legends* when we grab a review version... ■



Here, you appear to be fighting a giant bulldog puppy without a head. What will they think of next? (top). "Give me... a bottle of pestilence and a quarter pound of wine gums." (bottom)





# Street Supremacy

Take over Tokyo in this inventive team racer

● Genre: Racer ● Publisher: Konami  
● Developer: Genki ● Release: March 31  
● Website: [www.konami.com/gs](http://www.konami.com/gs)



Looks nice, but imagine the front one is blasting DJ Otzi and the whole scene loses some appeal

Players compete to win races by depleting opponents' 'Spirit Points' through dominating races in terms of speed and brute force.

**E**ver sat, frustrated, in a traffic jam on the way back from work and dreamt of open roads, high-powered cars and taking on your fellow commuters in head-to-head races and battle modes? Before turning your attention back to Five Live, that is?

Konami's new multi-player effort is designed specifically to be played as a team-based racer, pitting you in 'five-versus-five' knockout tournaments. Alternatively there's a two-player wireless mode that features a straight head-to-head form of racing.

OK. Pay attention now - here comes the technical bit. *Street Supremacy*'s 'Team Battle' mode sees you cherry-picking a crack team of ace drivers to play against rival gangs. Players compete to win races by depleting opponents' 'Spirit Points' through dominating races in terms of speed and brute force. The more you pull ahead, the more you bash your rivals' cars about and the less damage your own car suffers, the more you sap their Spirit Points.

You'll battle it out over fifteen areas of the game map, with different players taking on different races. Wins increase team loyalty, let you recruit defeated riders and increase your supremacy on the streets while being upgraded in the rankings.

As you'd expect, vehicles in the game are highly customisable, allowing you to kit out your Nissans, Mitsubishis and Subarus with performance-altering exhausts and engine upgrades to gain the upper hand or, at a tackier but much more amusing level, go-faster stripes.

All of this lends something of an RPG quality to the game, rather than a succession of unconnected trials by speed. *Street Supremacy* looks like an interesting and so far unique take on the racer genre on the PSP, and some time and effort has gone into the look of the game, moodily evoking the streets and highways of Tokyo. Bear it in mind the next time you're doing the five o'clock slog from work and your own personal spirit points sap away. ■



That means press the accelerate button really hard

Take it for a test drive you say? Sure! Mind if I engage in a series of illegal street races?





*Open top.  
Open road.  
Open the throttle.*



*Feel the kick as you put your foot to the floor in the Ferrari of your choice and burn your way across the U.S.A. From the winding roads of San Francisco to the beautiful beaches of Miami, grip the wheel and go coast to coast.*

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# OutRun 2006 Coast 2 Coast



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# World Championship Poker 2: Featuring Howard Lederer

All the fun of the casino without that sinking feeling in your wallet

● Genre: Gambling ● Publisher: Crave  
● Developer: Point of View ● Release: April 28  
● Website: [www.cravegames.com](http://www.cravegames.com)

**N**ight owls, those who can receive Channel Five anyway, will attest to the fact that poker is pretty addictive, even from a spectator point of view. The hats. The glamour. The way people stand up when they go 'all in'. It should come as no surprise then that a glut of poker games are coming to the PSP, with *World Championship Poker 2* odds-on to score a hit.

*World Championship Poker 2* features a detailed one player game, where you must work your way up the ranks, beginning with hustling in a basement. Once money and fame start to accumulate you'll move up the ladder and take on bigger and bigger pots. If Lady Luck isn't on your side, however, you'll have to start hawking around your belongings to pay for all the subsequent buy-ins.

There are 14 variations of poker on offer here - including the ever-popular Texas Hold 'Em - with different levels of simulation to cater for poker virgins through to grandmasters. An RPG-



Keep Losing for Long enough and you'll end up naked

like skill system will allow your customised character to grow and develop, while powerful opponent AI ramps up gameplay, or so we're told. (We can't get very far).

If the thought of actually breaking out a deck of cards is too much for you there's the option to connect wirelessly to your mate's PSP, or to play online against fellows PSPers or even PS2s. So break open that sippin' liquor, chew on a fat stogie and buy in. You have nothing to lose but your online bragging rights. ■

Once money and fame start to accumulate, you'll move up the ladder and take on bigger and bigger pots



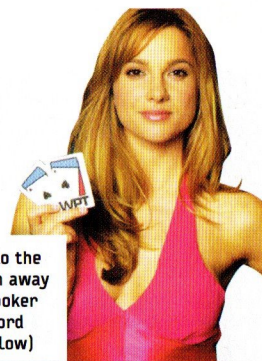
76 hours into the tournament and the players are starting to flag







His tell, a blank stare into the middle distance, gave him away again (left) You're a pro poker player, man. Can't you afford better togs that that? (below)



# World Poker Tour

Nothing for a pair?  
Not in this game...

● Genre: Gambling ● Publisher: 2K Sports  
● Developer: Backbone Entertainment ● Release:  
March 23 ● Website: [www.2ksports.com/games/wpt](http://www.2ksports.com/games/wpt)



## LEARNING EXPERIENCE

If *WPT* is anything like its big brother on PS2 (and it is - only with added extras) it will provide a perfect learning environment for newcomers and more seasoned card-sharps.

As you play, the AI learns your style and ramps up the difficulty of each hand. As a result you'll quickly find yourself having to vary your approach and experiment with new tactics if you're to progress through the game.

Accompanying your progress, you'll pick up that all-important awareness of win odds with the percentages displayed on-screen meaning you'll gradually make more informed decisions on whether to fold or hold.

Plus, quick-fire poker like this can see you whipping through a dozen hands in lightning speed, meaning you're bound to be a better player after a few sessions.

**C**ontrary to popular myth, poker has little to do with cards. Cash and chips, exchanged for real or on your PSP, are not want counts either. At its heart, the game's a psychological battle of bluff and bluster with no equal.

Enter: *World Poker Tour* which, rather than being a pared down version of the PS2 original, actually ups the ante across the board. This official handheld game of the globe's premier Texas Hold 'Em championship series features exclusive comments from featured pros including Antonio 'The Magician' Esfandiari and Phil 'Unabomber' Laak, for instance.

Not impressed? Maybe the twenty PSP exclusive invitational events, 50 poker lingo tips and a new play styles screen (so you can eye up your foes) will wet your appetite?



Look into the eyes, not around the eyes...

Other trumpeted improvements on the PS2 version include extra clothing items, new final table locations and an expanded roster of opponents (there are 200 players on the PSP tour). Better still, the number of taunts and dares of opponents battling to throw you off your game has been upped to over the 100 mark, raising the stakes further on a game should test your poker face to the limit.

For all the changes, the core aim of the game remains the same. You must work your way up through the ranks by winning your buy-ins to higher ranked tournament.

Where the PSP version comes into its own is in online functionality. Wireless technology means you take on your pals while sitting on the bog, or better still enter tournaments with up to 1000 other real-life opponents.

All of which means *WPT* PSP is shaping up as ideal for those of us who struggle to drag our mates into the same room on a school night for a proper session. And even if you decide to play alone, the 14 variants of poker - including Omaha, Pineapple, Double Flop Hold'em, Billabong, Tahoe and Shanghai, all of which sound like cocktails to us - will have you honing your skills ready to fleece your unwitting pals next time you hook up. ■





Kicking people in the face was popular back in the 1980s (Captain Commando, above). A samurai? Killing robots? On high buildings in Russia? Sure, why not (Strider, right)



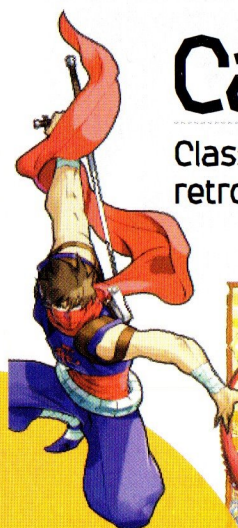
ONE TO WATCH

PlayStation Portable

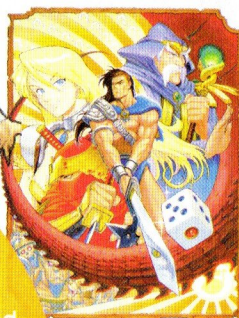
# Capcom Classics Collection Remixed

Classic arcade collection fires retro taste-buds

● **Genre:** Action ● **Publisher:** Capcom  
● **Developer:** Digital Eclipse Software  
● **Release:** March ● **Website:** [www.capcom.com](http://www.capcom.com)



Capcom Classics Collection Remixed is about to have you searching for a 10p-sized slot on your handheld Sony sidekick



**E**ver long for the days when the nearest thing you got to a PSP was a six-foot 200-kilo games machine in an amusement arcade? Well fear not, *Capcom Classics Collection Remixed* is about to have you searching for a 10p-sized slot on your handheld Sony sidekick.

Twenty classic Capcom games are included here, including heavyweights *Street Fighter*, *Strider* and *1941*; with *Avengers*, *Block Block*, *Captain Commando*, *Magic Sword*, *Quiz And Dragons*, *Three Wonders*, and *Varth* also present and correct.

Because your PSP loves you it will enable you to play games in a variety of aspect ratios, including normal, stretch or, depending on the title, its original vertical orientation. Plus there's wireless multiplayer action to be had with your

mates, customisable controls, downloadable theme tunes and a glut of bonus material including artwork and music based around the original releases.

There's a good mix of platform, beat-em-ups, scrolling shoot-em-ups and puzzles here, lovingly recreated in original arcade graphics and format. Plus the inclusion of *Strider*, notable by its absence on other Capcom collection releases, should excite more knowledgeable retro fans.

These games are undoubtedly of a simpler, less ambitious era, but that doesn't detract from their charm. In fact, they display an awareness of what keeps gamers coming back for more without the need for elaborate set-ups or lavish graphics.

An instant games collection for your PSP on one UMD - we can't wait... ■



"Kids today don't know they're born... years ago all we had was a bat and a ball, we made our own entertainment..." (above). Chocks away! What do you mean you've forgotten the chocks? (Left)





Playing chicken takes on a strange and terrifying new meaning



He's huge, and he's feeling horny



# Monster Hunter Freedom

Big trouble in little handheld...

● Genre: Puzzle ● Publisher: Capcom  
● Developer: Capcom ● Release: March 31  
● Website: [www.capcom-europe.com](http://www.capcom-europe.com)



Either this guy's got to kill something really big, or he's overcompensating for something

**R**oaring, snorting and expelling bile like a rotund country landowner drunk on port, *Monster Hunter Freedom* will soon be clawing onto PSP with its giddy blend of RPG action and huge beasties.

Chances are it will be even better than its big console forebears too, thanks to four-player wireless teamwork that will have you forming a fellowship of warriors to battle every nasty in sight.

The core gameplay is classic RPG fare and will be familiar to fans of *Monster Hunter* for PS2. You must complete quests to level-up and

improve your armour and arsenal. Defeating creatures from dragons to peeved, house-sized slug-a-likes will also earn you new kit and bountiful kudos.

New weapons, missions and even a fully-fledged two-player co-op mode are added to the inventory for PSP, even though much effort and processing power has clearly gone into making the graphics very shiny indeed.

And when you've finished gawping at the roaming beasties, you can always head back to your village for a bit of monster-free downtime. While you're back at the ranch - and you're not resting up, stashing your goodies, buying upgrades or... er, fishing, we highly recommend you pop into the Felyne Kitchen. This bizarre eatery is staffed by a team of cooking cats who can rustle up a treat that'll boost your attributes for the quest ahead. And if culinary felines aren't reason enough to get excited about a game, then what is? ■



For you, I cook Whiskas surprise







Each new level kicks off with a fiendish elemental mystery that only a bubble-related solution can overcome

Laws of physics be damned! Bubbles are versatile things, proving the ideal receptacle for anything from plumes of flame to errant baddies (left). Evolution's diverse landscapes pose a number of different, environment-related challenges (below)



# Bubble Bobble Evolution

Bubblicious retro puzzler gets a 3D PSP makeover

● **Genre:** Action/Puzzle ● **Publisher:** Rising Star Games  
● **Developer:** Marvellous Interactive ● **Release:** March  
● **Website:** [www.risingstargames.com](http://www.risingstargames.com)



**B**ub and Bob are gaming gods. That's mainly down to the fact they've starred in a pile of *Tetris*-thwacking addictive puzzlers since *Bubble Bobble* back in the days before games had graphics.

In this shiny new PSP update of the series, you play one of the aforementioned legends, human brothers trapped in the form of prehistoric bubble-blowing reptiles by an evil nemesis.

Gameplay revolves around seeing off nasties with soapy spheres; negotiating tricky obstacles

and fighting your way to the top of the Towers of Entertainment for a final showdown with your adversary. Puzzles elements are set to give *Evolution* extra depth, with each new level kicking off with a fiendish elemental mystery that only a bubble-related solution can overcome; from finding fire in order to melt walls of ice to watering seeds that grow and form new platforms.

Retro-heads are bound to find *BBE* a pleasingly nostalgic experience, with the classic platform framework given a new coat of 21st century polish. The cylindrical nature of the levels consist of three screens that you can toggle between, connected around a central spindle, showing off the PSP's power via dynamic and real purdy visuals. Provided plenty of the core bubble-based gameplay of its forebears is retained, we expect this to be an addictive and POP!-ular (sorry) puzzler. ■



Washing-up liquid supplies were running low



Donkey Kong appeared to be on his lunch break





Swords? Thanks, but frankly we prefer the sorcery

# Astonishia Story

Vintage Korean RPG debuts on PSP with new cutscenes and extra spell-chucking vim

● **Genre:** RPG ● **Publisher:** Ubisoft  
● **Developer:** Sonnori ● **Release:** March 31  
● **Website:** [www.astonishia.com](http://www.astonishia.com)



Before adventuring, load up on essential supplies. Make sure to ask for Kendal mint cake

**T**he initial lack of role-playing games on the PSP has not gone unnoticed, but in amongst a few forthcoming genre favourites nestles the improbably-titled and largely unheralded *Astonishia Story*. Originally a big hit in the Far East, this Korean port has had those who know their Oriental gaming onions wetting themselves at the prospect of a UK release.

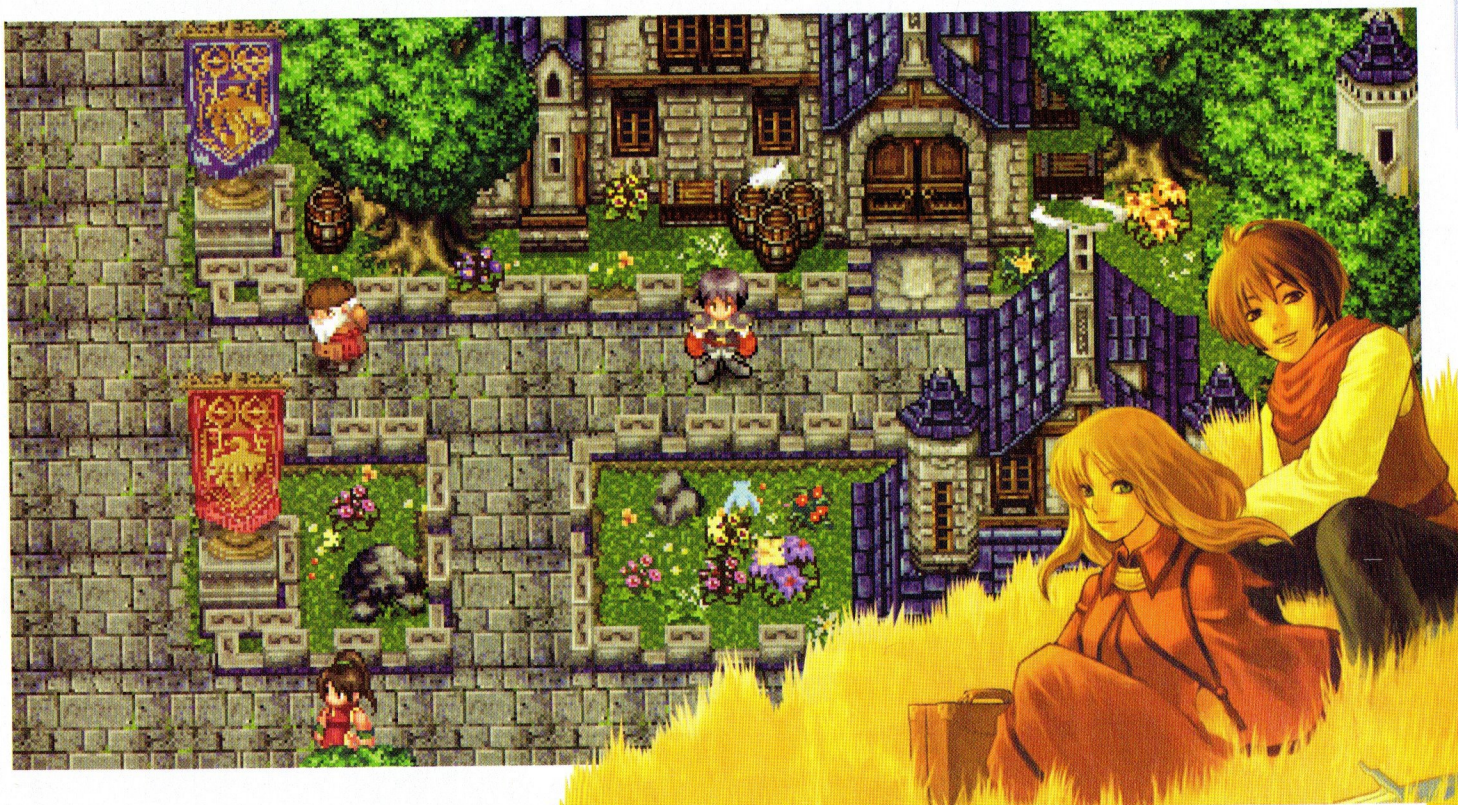
You play as a Royal Knight charged with recovering a sacred relic, assisted by a hefty bunch of spell-chucking wizards. This may not exactly sound like novel territory, but *Astonishia* is being billed as a good old fashioned RPG for the PSP generation, so who cares about originality?

Gameplay is that of a classic linear RPG, consisting of regular turn-based battles with a

collection of nasties, aided and abetted by your various allies, all of whom true to RPG form, look cute and Far Eastern.

The PSP version is actually a port of the classic PC game from 1994, so visually the game is undeniably retro in concept and tone, all sprite-based animations and simplistic characters. However it features detailed animations and in-game cutscenes, with the PSP version boasting souped-up graphics, presented in widescreen with richer colours.

Make no mistake, if you're looking for a Hollywood-style high-end graphical blockbuster, this ain't it. But despite its vintage, we're predicting there'll be plenty to enjoy here, from the charming graphics to pleasingly old-skool gameplay. If that sort of thing floats your boat, *Astonishia* may be just the ticket. ■





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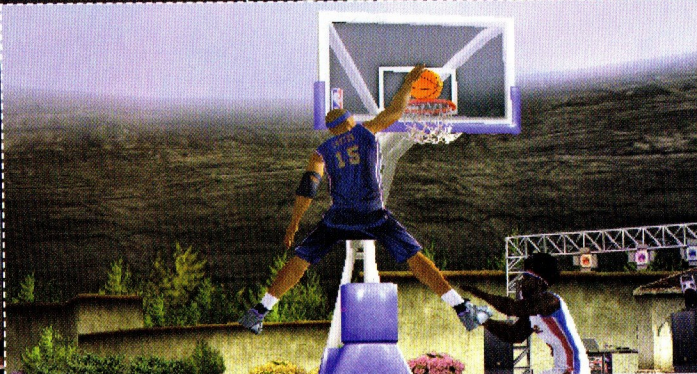
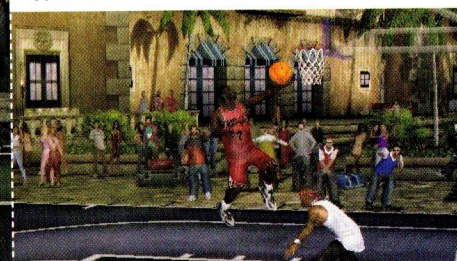
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The classic 'floating in mid-air' technique is a tricky one to pull off (left). Wrong-foot your opponent with a deft alley-oop (below)



# NBA Ballers: Rebound

No sniggering. It's what they call basketballers in America

Genre: Sports Action Publisher: Midway  
Developer: Sony Online Entertainment  
Release: March 31 Website: [www.midway.com](http://www.midway.com)



Freakishly impressive airtime is a feature of the game throughout

As with so much these days, it's not enough to specialise in one area: supermarkets will be selling everything from bog roll and carrots to private islands and butlers next. It's much the same in *NBA Ballers: Rebound*...

Whereas once a game like this would consist of shooting some hoops, *Rebound* sees you playing as a variety of famous names playing ball in a series of urban environments, gaining bling and respect as you go.

There are several modes of gameplay included here, the most interesting of which is Rags-to-Riches, in which you create your very own baller and set him on his way in the basketball arena. You can choose not only your player's physical characteristics and style, but also control his psyche; from the straightforward say-your-prayers and take-your-vitamins hard worker to a party-lovin' superstar (hi, Dennis Rodman). Or if you don't fancy starting at the bottom, there's the TV mode, which lets you unlock classic and contemporary stars like Tracy McGrady, Chris Webber and Kobe Bryant, and NBA Legends including George Gervin, Magic Johnson and Wilt Chamberlain (what do you mean you've never heard of them?)

Of course, there's a wealth of multi-player options: three-player mode makes for an interesting change to the dynamic and a wireless two-player mode pads out the gameplay. Visually, too, *Rebound* is shaping up to be a treat, with stylish graphics making for realistic facial renderings. It's another quietly impressive facet of a game that covers all the bases, and then some. Basketball fans should lap it up, while even those who think hoops are something to do with spaghetti may be tempted. ■



Hi, boss? I think I'll work from home today



Still struggling with the whole turn-based card-flipping Metal Gear thing? Get over it. This is shaping up to be quality stealth action. Get involved



# Metal Gear Acid 2

We go one-on-one with Metal Gear Solid's little handheld brother

● **Genre:** Strategy action ● **Publisher:** Konami  
● **Developer:** Kojima Productions ● **Release:** Summer  
● **Website:** [www.konami.jp/gs/kojima\\_pro/english](http://www.konami.jp/gs/kojima_pro/english)



At the start of each mission you're clearly given your objective, so you shouldn't be stuck for what to do

It's no surprise that *MGA2* looks sharp like sushi knives. What is a shock to the system is the game's new hyper-stylised colour palette. It's bright like a crayon in the eye, but we have to admit the new looks are miles better than *MGA1*'s dull old military paint box.

This latest *Acid* adventure still plays like an electronic board game, with an odd mix of grid-based strategy and playing cards but it's managed to pick up some new tricks. Solid Snake's movement, for example, has been overhauled. You now shift around him manually with the analogue stick rather than picking a

destination, selecting 'move' and sitting back to watch. The other controls have also been streamlined with all options now displayed clearly on screen.

Before each mission you are dealt a 'hand' from a potential 500+ cards. You receive various weapons, skill and attribute cards which can then be used, or traded in for movement. To help form your world-saving tactics, you can get a top-down view of the level and use the shoulder buttons to swing the camera around. You can also use the cursor to collect Intel on soldiers, CCTV cameras, equipment and objectives. Highlight an enemy grunt and pink squares light up to show his field of vision.

The cards cover all Snake's usual skills. For example, you could set a claymore mine and tap the wall to attract a guard into a trap or creep up behind a soldier and use a 'choke' card to knock them out. It depends entirely on what you get dealt. You can also utilize new card types like the trap/attack card to enhance your abilities, and boost defensive or offensive skills. Or use experience points earned from completed missions to buy packs of special *Metal Gear Solid* 3 cards which boost powers further or include special attacks. A 'Fury' card for example lets you unleash a pyrotechnic flamethrower assault. It's this strategic potential and flexibility that make for some rewardingly different tactical espionage. It might not be Snake as we know him on PS2 but don't let that put you off what's shaping up to be another fascinating adventure in the *Metal Gear* universe. ■



Chances are that the chap with the honking great red thing is going to hit you in the face with it

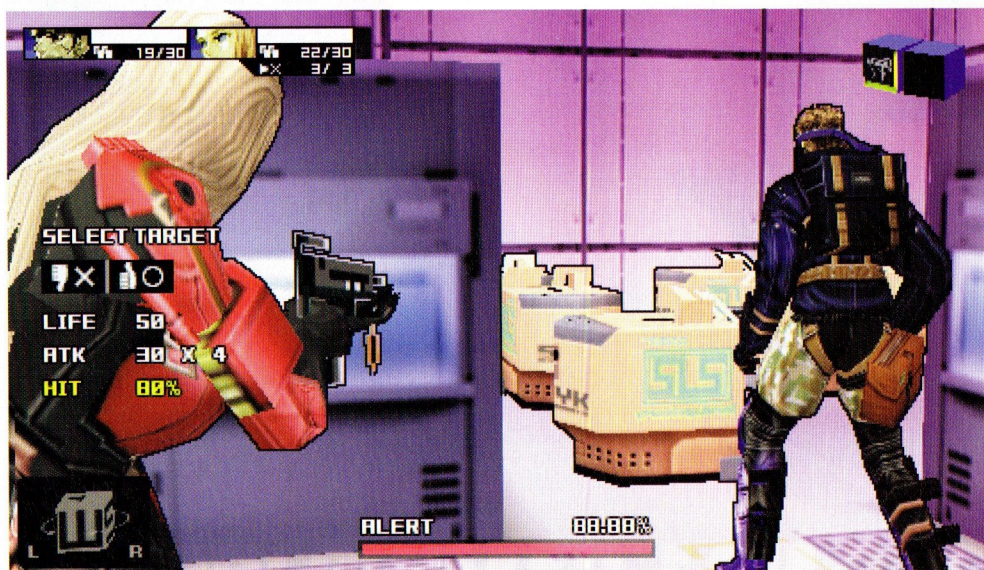
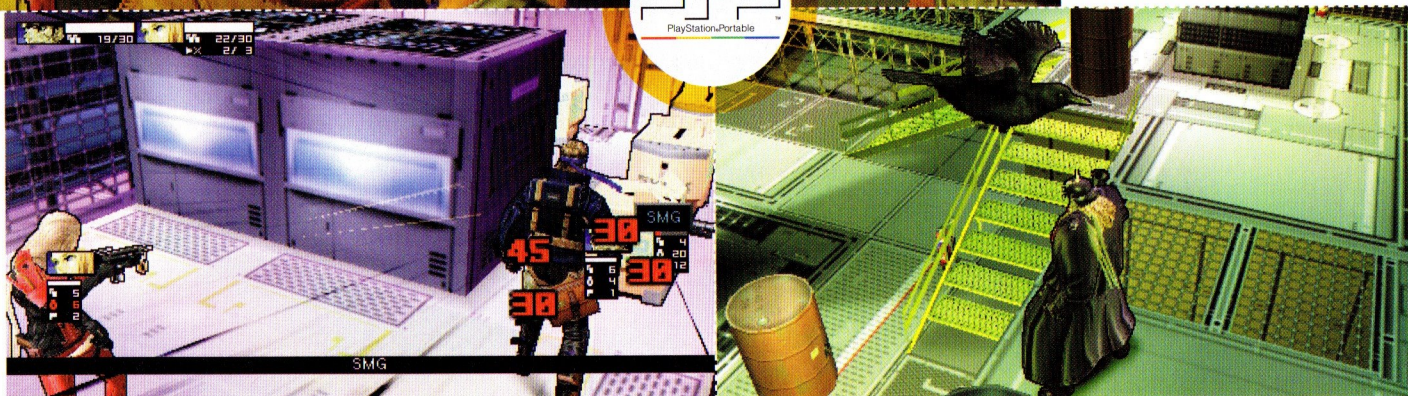


You're not dying just yet.



No *Metal Gear Solid* game has ever looked quite like this - it's a wonderful new visual style for the series

ONE TO WATCH  
PlayStation Portable



It's good to see that *Metal Gear Acid 2* is keeping its surreal sense of reality. We're a bit worried about what 'fertilisation' means



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# REVIEWS

**F**rom gang-bangers waving Glockes to cops jumping onto Chevrolets, boxing apes to star footballers, *The Lord of the Rings* to *Spider-Man 2*, there's nothing the PSP experience can't deliver. It's been less than six months since the PSP went on sale and already this must-have item's got games galore to tempt you. Whether you like action or sports, cartoon characters or hard-boiled homies, there's a game for you here. Each one's been played, tested and judged by gaming experts, so you know you can trust the rating on each review. ■

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3



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FIFA STREET



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METAL GEAR ACID

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EXIT

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His mum had bought him the whole football kit, but Totti still had NO FRIENDS



### In The Kit Bag

The features that give *FIFA Street 2* on PSP game

#### Skills Battles

One-on-one battles using the trick stick

#### Gamebreaker

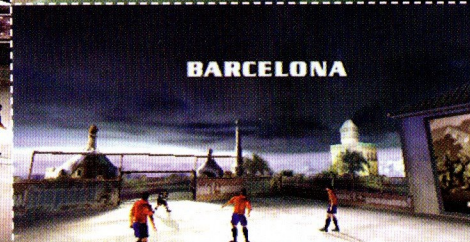
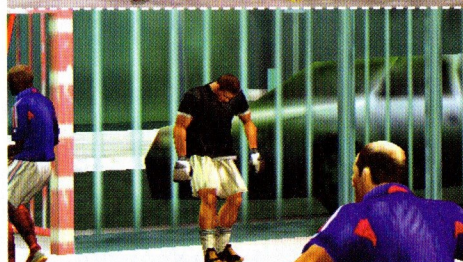
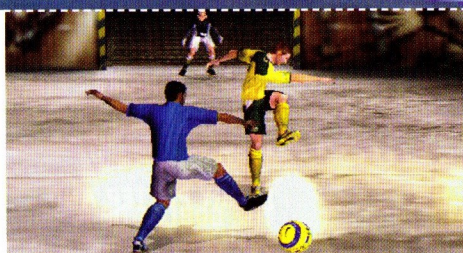
Obliterate rivals with tricks and show off your special moves during Multiplayer Trick Gamebreaker moments

#### New streets

Visit Tokyo, Vancouver, Cairns, Munich and La Boca

#### Sharp Shot

Get your shooting boots on and battle the game's top keepers in a new mini-game



The environments might be urban, but *FIFA Street 2* doesn't stray too far from core football (above). Ah, Barcelona - what a beautiful horizon (left). Phew, it was nearly another 'Can we have our ball back please mister?' moment (below left)



# FIFA STREET 2

FOOTIE TAKES TO THE AVENUES AND ALLEYWAYS IN EA'S **OH SO URBAN** PSP CONVERSION

● Publisher: Electronic Arts ● Developer: EA Canada ● Price: £34.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: Yes ● Downloads: No

If the truth be told, there still isn't an outstanding football game on PSP. *PES5* operates at way below its potential, while *FIFA* and *World Tour Soccer* both suffer from muddy controls and poor visuals. So, given that the full PS2 version of *FIFA Street 2* received a less than Premier League score in our *Official* sister organ, you're probably expecting this version to stack up fairly close to the bottom of this list of PSP football games.

You'd be wrong, though. Quite unexpectedly, the quick burst combo-based approach to show-off football in *Street 2* is perfectly suited to the on-the-move hand-held format. This is due in part to the simplified control system. Ditching the Trick Stick, ball skills are assigned to Ⓐ. Holding the L shoulder for close control and then bashing said button means that making clowns of your opponents is now a breeze. Once you've built up five tricks in a row, the ubiquitous 'Street' Gamebreaker is initiated, and rather than the screen

going a muddy red colour (like the PS2 version), a short multi-angle cinematic plays out as you smash home a wondergoal - which is a far neater and less obtrusive mechanism.

## Ditch the Trick Stick

Challenging the players who try to go round you is also less convoluted. With the PS2 game this involved more trickery with the Trick Stick, here a button flashes up which you need to hit at the right time. In fact, the short and fast style of

*Street* is a sensible approach to football 'on the go' when compared to its more serious, sim-minded soccer cousins. If it's a toss-up between a quick game-for-laffs of headers and volleys in the park with mates or a go-minute slog in the rain on a Sunday morning, this time, we'll go with the *Street* option. ■

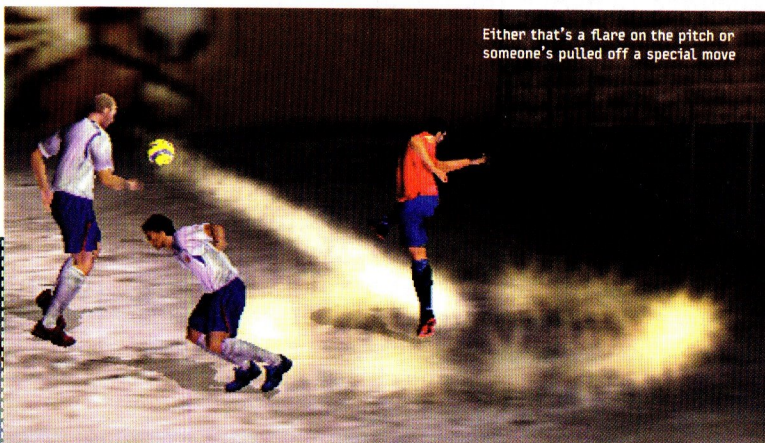
## VERDICT

If you're looking for a new football game on PSP, then *Street* is the friendliest option. Ignore the urban stylings, and it's a blast

7



Once you've built up five tricks in a row, the 'Street' Gamebreaker is initiated, and a short multi-angle cinematic plays out as you smash home a wondergoal



Street footy? And we thought Rooney wouldn't get out of bed these days for less than a six-figure pay cheque

## IN-DEPTH

FIFA STREET 2

**Pros:** Pick-up-and-play, user-friendly controls

**Cons:** Too novelty for earnest soccer fans

**Graphics:** Chunky, colourful and well-animated

**Sound:** Much like listening to a 74 presenter's iPod

**Gameplay:** Simplified, but all the better for it

**Lifespan:** Tournaments ramp this up

8

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# GRAND THEFT AUTO: LIBERTY CITY STORIES

STEALING CARS AND CAPPING ASS, 24/7

● Publisher: Rockstar ● Developer: Rockstar Leeds/Rockstar North ● Price: £39.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: Yes ● Downloads: Yes

A minuscule scratch on your new motor's impeccable paint work; the overblown, schmaltz-coated ending to every great movie; a questionable hair in your dinner: it only takes one small blemish to spoil perfection. For months, the brains behind *Grand Theft Auto* have teased us with this, a game with the potential to completely redefine handheld gaming in the same way that Rockstar has continually pushed the boundaries of what can be achieved on PS2. The good news is that *Liberty City Stories* is an engrossing addition to the series,

strolls past a fast-food store named 'Tube' – a typically close-to-the-bone parody of a certain American sandwich chain. We're yet to tear into the traditional bundle of slick cars, powerful guns and brilliantly satirical radio stations, but we're already happy. We've returned to Liberty City, and it's good to be back.

## Welcome home

It's probably been a couple of years since you last fired up *GTAIII*, but you'll instantly recognise sections of the Liberty City map, almost as though *Vice City* and *San Andreas* never existed. Once you've

bursts. It's not long before you're fawning over the atmospheric graphics and almost negligible loading times.

The simple early missions done, you're soon embroiled in a handful of potentially lethal situations. There are still times when you'll struggle to kill the right guy, as the game's targeting system is cumbersome. It's obviously similar to *San Andreas*, but more often than not you'll find a civilian is the default choice, when you really want shoot the bad guy.

Minor faults aside, there's no denying that *LCS* is a superb effort. And if the small flaws do get you down, multiplayer is there to save the day. If you're looking for a portable amalgamation of the best bits from *GTAIII* and *Vice City* (a greatest hits package, of sorts) you'll get plenty of love out of it. After all, it's *GTA* in the crapper, under the desk, on the bus or wherever else you like to play games. You could even take it to the pub and adopt Cipriani as your new drinking buddy if you haven't got any real mates. Remember though, you can't take it anywhere unless you own it. And own it you must. Now. ■



**CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE. THIS IS THE BEST GAME CURRENTLY AVAILABLE ON PSP, STEALTHILY EDGING PAST RIDGE AND LUMINES TO REACH THE TOP OF THE PILE**

but a similar set of tiny blemishes prevent it from becoming the all-conquering god-in-your-palms we hoped for.

Still, credit where it's due. This is the best game currently available on PSP, stealthily edging its way past *Ridge Racer* and *Lumines* to reach the top of the pile. The series' traditionally dry humour is evident within go seconds of flicking on the PSP, as lead character Toni Cipriani

swept through the thinly veiled training tasks, it's onto the standard favourites – racing along streets at speeds that would give Fernando Alonso the runs, tracking down and murdering those who've crossed the boss and helping fellow crims get up to no good while evading the long and trigger-happy arm of the law. Missions are slightly shorter than you're used to – the idea being that you can dip in and out in ten-minute

## VERDICT

*LCS* is a brilliant extension of the *GTA* series, and the new yardstick against which every future PSP title will be measured

9

## IN-DEPTH

GTA: LIBERTY CITY STORIES

**Pros:** It's a handheld *GTA*, it's got everything you love about the series, plus multiplayer

**Cons:** Targeting issues, and a little jerky

**Graphics:** Gloriously colourful hues, but darkness is an issue

**Sound:** As ever, there's plenty of hilarity across the airwaves

**Gameplay:** Minor issues aside, it's unmistakably *GTA*

**Lifespan:** With multiplayer here, you'll never stop playing

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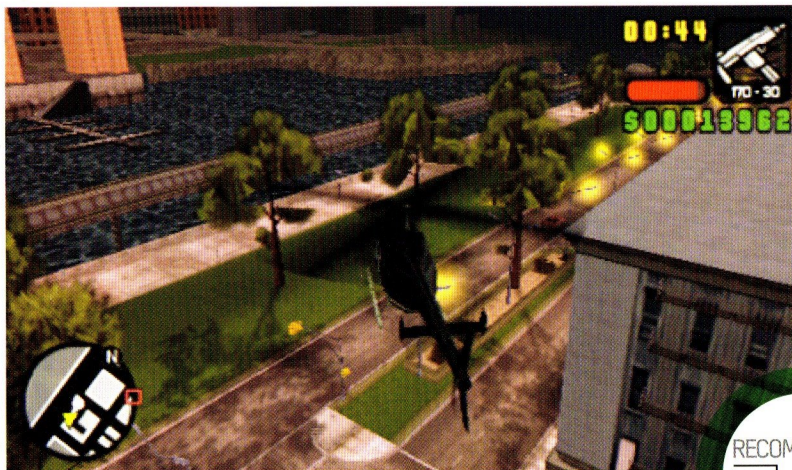
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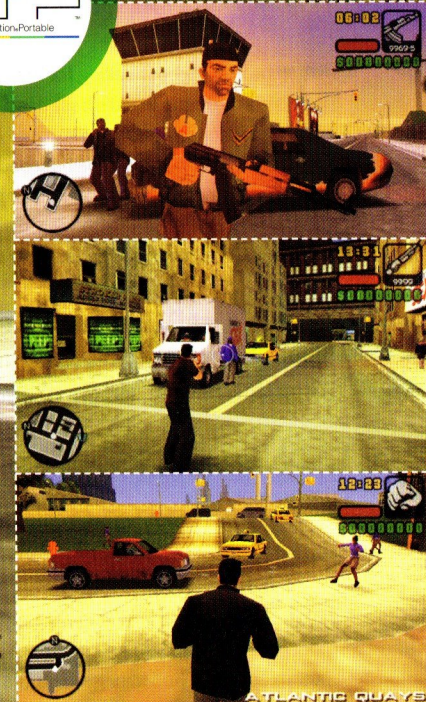
Targeting is an issue in *Liberty City Stories*, but it's never problematic enough to spoil the game, even when you end up shooting an innocent civilian instead of the person you really wanted to kill. But that's all part of the fun



As ever, there's a huge amount of vehicles to drive, including some surprise additions, such as this helicopter



RECOMMENDED  
PlayStation Portable



## Who's Who?

### Toni Cipriani

Liberty City Stories' anti-hero, blessed with a cold heart, a warm temper and a face that only a mother could love. The only trouble with that is...

### Momma Cipriani

Toni's old dear isn't exactly his biggest fan. In fact, she finds him an embarrassment and spends the entire game trying to have him bumped off.

### Donald Love

Lunatic, meditating, wannabe politician who eats people. You'll know him as the head of Love Media in GTAIII, so he's clearly sticking around.

### Paulie Sindacco

Head of the Sindacco family, with big connections in Las Venturas. Rarely seen but always on hand to finish any tricky job - be very wary when this chap's around.

### JD O'Toole

Sindacco employee and career criminal with lots of leverage. Some of your first jobs will be under his guidance.

### Jane Hopper

Head of the union workers, striking to block a proposed tunnel from the Portland to Shoreside districts of Liberty City. Another one for your hit list.



When you're not marvelling at the amount of vehicles you can jack and drive, you'll be rightly laughing out loud at the amount of ordnance you can deploy. The minigun's always fun



# FIFA 06

FIFA SHANKS ITS CHANCE TO BEAT PRO EVO

● Publisher: Electronic Arts ● Developer: Electronic Arts ● Price: £34.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: Yes ● Downloads: No

The world's best-selling football game on the world's best hand-held console? You might have expected a match made in ball-shaped heaven. Well, not quite. Despite making the transfer to PSP complete with its usual array of bells and whistles, *FIFA 06*

pick out the ball when play moved to the far side of the pitch. Encouraging a wider perspective seems to be a way of obscuring the stuttering player animation and lack of realistic character movement.

This has an obvious knock-on effect on the gameplay. Yes, it's still accessible



**Yes, it's still accessible and yes, it's still possible to play sharp, satisfying football. But all too often it feels unresponsive, with players slow to move a pass on**

seems yet to have settled into its new PSP surroundings.

The off-field quality is still very much in evidence, but there's a sense that on the pitch things haven't quite come together yet. Take the exclusive 'Juggling' mode - kick-ups to you and me. This rhythm action-styled mini-game turns the screen vertically and asks you to press directions in time to a ball-juggling footy star of your choice. Nice idea. But instead of being a pleasantly diverting addition, it's an infuriating shambles.

The main game fares little better. The high visual standards slip disappointingly when the action proper begins. Using the default view settings, we found the players too small to control comfortably, and it's only with the camera set to maximum zoom that we could effectively

and yes, it's still possible to play sharp, satisfying football. But all too often it feels unresponsive, with players slow to move a pass on or turn away from a defender, and the movement of the ball is languid. Just like the PS2 version, it's frustratingly hard to move away from defenders - a situation not helped by the compression of all the skill controls into variations of left shoulder button presses that have to be combined with a direction on the analogue stick.

*FIFA* is evolving on all formats. It's moving away from shallow-but-slick arcade play and into something more like *Pro Evo* territory. The ironic thing is that, for PSP at least, something arcadey would probably have worked better. *FIFA 06* is worth a look, but we're already looking to next year's improvements. ■

## VERDICT

*FIFA's* class is not in doubt, but for a series already in a clear state of transition, the move to a new platform is a bridge too far

6

## IN-DEPTH

FIFA 06

**Pros:** Accessible and sharp

**Cons:** Poor timing detection

**Graphics:** Less-than-lovely animation

**Sound:** Clive Tyldesley adds some class

**Gameplay:** Infuriatingly lacking in fluidity

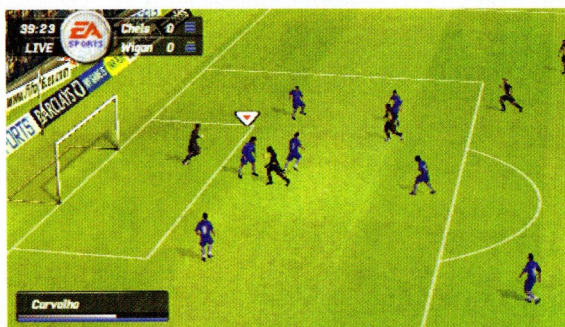
**Lifespan:** Season mode offers some extended interest

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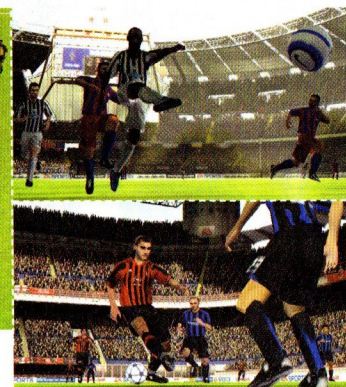
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Small players can be difficult to control and the ball hard to pick out when the action moves to the far side of the pitch.



Moving away from defenders feels slow and the ball languid but it's still possible to play a sharp game of football



## sing when you're winning

This year's *FIFA* boasts a cosmopolitan range of global music. Here's our list of the best tracks and the ideal time to play them

**Track:** K'naan's *Soobax*

**Play it:** During the build-up to the African Cup of Nations final. Watch the music video included in the game and get a real feel for the match day surroundings.

**Track:** Bloc Party's *Helicopter*

**Play it:** As much as possible, but especially to set the atmosphere before those crucial derbies.

**Track:** boTECOeleto's

*Coco Nutz Mass*

**Play it:** And feel the Samba rhythm flowing through you, in preparation for the biggest grudge match in global football: Brazil vs Argentina.

**Track:** Jamiroquai's

*Feels Just Like It Should*

**Play it:** When you've gone deaf. And even then just the once.



# STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3 MAX

DRAGON-PUNCHING ITS WAY BACK TO TOP FORM

● Publisher: Capcom ● Developer: Capcom ● Price: £29.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: Yes ● Downloads: No

If you're too young to remember the early '90s (or hibernated through them to avoid the era of the shell suit), you'll have missed the whole *Street Fighter II* phenomenon. Back then it was considered the greatest game on Earth, but the arrival of PlayStation saw it deposed by 3D fighters like *Tekken*.

The comeback begins here. *Alpha* forsakes tridimensional visuals for 'classic' 2D environments with few frills. The gameplay is equally uncomplicated, with the PSP's layout perfect for *Street Fighter*'s traditional six-button control system. The D-pad or nub are used for

both movement and combos – 15 years on, Ken's trademark Hadoken fireball is still actioned by hitting ↓, ↘, → and a punch button in quick succession. The new Variable Battle mode enables you to play with a tag team partner, while four new faces exclusive to PSP, like Britain's own Eagle from *Capcom vs SNK2*, are also included.

Handily for PSP, fights are brisk so you can dip in and out in ten-minute bursts or

batter your way through the entire arcade mode without getting bored. With a mass of different modes and speeds to conquer, there's plenty to keep you coming back, too. Time to fall in love with Chun-Li all over again. ■

## VERDICT

Swamped with characters and modes, *Alpha* is a fine example of how good golden oldies can be when revived in miniature

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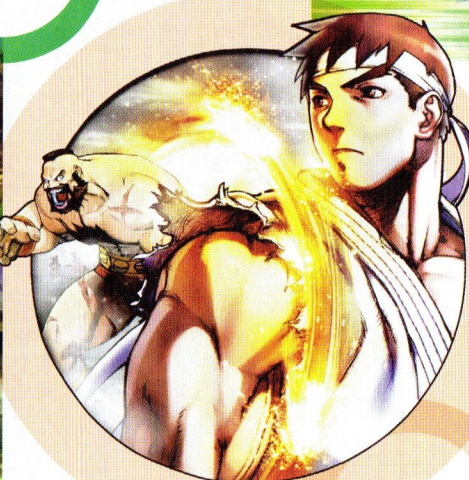
15 years on, Ken's trademark Hadoken fireball is still actioned by hitting ↓, ↘, → and a punch button in quick succession



New characters aplenty, although they don't have quite the same allure as old favourites like Blanka



Here, in an incident to shame any Vietnam veteran, Guile is getting a kicking from a girl and a man in pyjamas (above). Fight realism? Give us cartoon explosions anyday (right)



## IN-DEPTH

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3 MAX

**Pros:** Faithful to the original gameplay, tag-team mode

**Cons:** Some of the new characters aren't all that

**Graphics:** Bright chromes and colourful moves

**Sound:** Traditionally cheesy music and move calls

**Gameplay:** Swift bouts are well suited to handheld

**Lifespan:** You'll keep returning for a bout or six

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# LEMMINGS

INGENIOUS **SAVE-THE-SPECIES** CLASSIC  
PUZZLER GOES PORTABLE



● Publisher: Sony ● Developer: Team 17 ● Price: £34.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: Yes ● Downloads: Yes

For suicidal critters, the *Lemmings* are masters of survival. Now they're on PSP and the game absolutely rocks.

Crucially, the series' classic gameplay hasn't changed since the original *Lemmings* back in 1990. The aim of the game is to guide your lemmings from the level entrance to the exit, ensuring that enough of them survive to progress.



The aim of the game is to guide your lemmings from the level entrance to the exit, ensuring that enough survive in order to progress



Without your intervention, though, the lemmings will wander off and get killed, so you must assign tasks to limited numbers of specialists – digging trenches, building bridges and, most importantly, blocking their fellow lemmings until the work has been completed and a safe passage to the exit is available.

A throwback to the days when pure and simple game design reigned supreme, *Lemmings* is one of the most instantly playable and addictive games that will ever grace your PSP. Superb handheld puzzling. ■

## VERDICT

A puzzle game that ranks alongside *Bust-A-Move* and *Tetris* in the all-time greats, *Lemmings* is ideal for PSP play

8

RECOMMENDED  
PlayStation Portable

## IN-DEPTH

### LEMMINGS

**Pros:** Pint-sized strategy genius, furiously addictive

**Cons:** It's an old game. Shouldn't this be a budget title?

**Graphics:** Small but perfectly formed, neat and functional landscapes

**Sound:** Expected blips and bleeps, plus insanely catchy theme tune

**Gameplay:** Strategy that bends your mind, plus 'one more go' factor

**Lifespan:** So addictive you might pack in your human life and become one of them

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Our lemmings are safe for now, but if that spider comes back we're all screwed



# WORLD SNOOKER CHALLENGE 2005

NOW YOU CAN **KISS THE PINK** AND POT THE BROWN ON THE BUS

● Publisher: Sega ● Developer: Blade ● Price: £34.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: Yes ● Downloads: No

**W**ith over 100 licensed players, full commentary and loads of game options, no one could ever accuse this of being a lightweight stick sim. On top of snooker, there's also pool, billiards and some devious trick shot challenges, all backed up by a helpful auto-save function after every shot that makes this perfect for playing on the move.

If you're worrying about how well a huge snooker table translates onto the PSP, then don't, since solid physics make everything feel believably heavy while superb controls grab your attention. Using the analogue nub to pull back your

cue enables you to delicately control the power of your shot and it works a treat, letting you gently kiss the ball or smash it the length of the table. Despite this, novice pool-sharks will still need the aim-assisting arrows for guidance as they learn to give the ball spin and how to tilt the cue's angle to get the perfect shot.

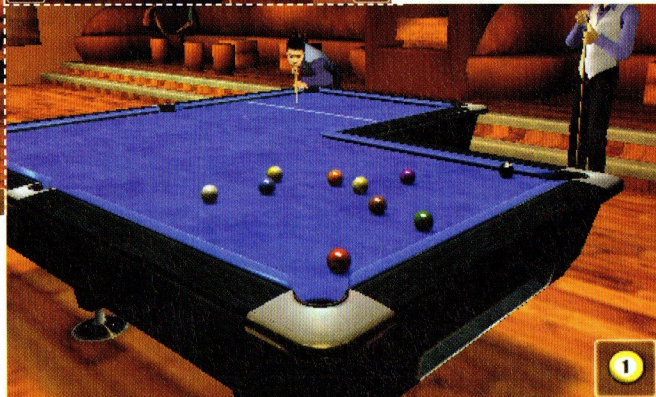
One area *World Snooker* excels in is the multiplayer. Clearing the table as your mates look on and grind their teeth is



**Using the analogue nub to pull back your cue enables you to delicately control the power of your shot, and it works a treat**



Rectangular tables are so February 2006, dahling (above). It's all in the angles: *World Snooker* boasts a flexible camera that lets you view a shot from a multiplicity of perspectives (right)



what gaming's all about. However, single player is extremely challenging and that difficulty might be a deterrent. Put in some practice, though, and you'll be rewarded with an experience every bit as strategic and subtle as the real sport. ■

## VERDICT

Whether you play WiFi or solo, this is a sweetly optimised snooker experience for PSP. The analogue cue is a particularly nice touch.

7



"Next time, I'll do it with the triangles ON FIRE"

## IN-DEPTH WORLD SNOOKER

**Pros:** Auto-save between shots, cool multi-player mode

**Cons:** One player perhaps too challenging for snooker rookies

**Graphics:** Crisp potting action from multiple angles

**Sound:** Click. Click. Clunk. What more do you want?

**Gameplay:** Analogue cue is an intuitive control method

**Lifespan:** Initially a little hard, but sports freaks should relish the challenge

8

7

7

6



Overview | Action Zone | 2D Pitch

Report | Player Rating | Latest Score | League Table

Newcastle United 1  
Charlton Athletic 1

31 :

## Player Cam

5. Emre

Position M

Age 24

Value £7.5M

Yellow 1

Red 0

Goals 1

Morale 100

Condition 87

Av Rating 84

GOAL Newcastle Utd Score

8. Dyer

Newcastle United



Options ▲

Tactics ▲

Pause

Stats  
Entertainment

Do the stars of CM play like their real-life counterparts? Let's take a look at the figures, Gary...

## Ronaldo

- Freakish mutant strength
- Volcanic temperament
- Legend in Three Lions
- Newly clean and card-free
- Realism rating: 9
- Only let down by lack of international footy

## Crouchy

- Surprisingly good touch
- Up for sale at end of season
- Wasteful in the box
- Giraffe on roller skates
- Realism rating: 7
- Where's the height/weight stat?

## Terry Hennessy

- Smug overconfidence
- Wants to join Barca
- Merciless finisher
- Slight whiff of garlic
- Realism rating: 6
- PSP needs scratch-n-sniff capability

## Super AJ

- Penalty spot king
- Baldy-headed assassin
- Best player in Championship
- Reviewer totally unbiased
- Realism rating: 8
- The Eagles are still staying down

Crystal Palace 3 v 1 Leicester City

Score at half time: 1-1

Kisnorboe backs into Johnson

Next Match: 05.11.05 Luton vs Crystal Palace

Traditional Position Team Senior

Pos	Inf	Player	Pos	Inf	Player
1	GR	Granville, D	1	GR	Kiraly, G
2	DC	Hall, F	2	DC	Butterfield, D
3	DC	Popovic, I	3	DC	Leighwood, M
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## MANAGE A FOOTBALLING EMPIRE ON THE MOVE

● **Publisher:** Eidos ● **Developer:** Gusto Games ● **Price:** £34.99 ● **WiFi Multiplayer:** No ● **Downloads:** Yes

When Sports Interactive – long-term developers of *Champ* – split from the title's publisher Eidos, fans of the series demonstrated their loyalty by snapping up the former's new game – *Football Manager 2005* – en masse, while Eidos' *Championship Manager 5* was panned. And rightly so. New developer Gusto Games have gone back to basics to restore some of the old magic. There's a classic *CM* feel here, from the way you handle scouts and train players, to the flashing text commentary. Tapping a key takes you to the next major event on your calendar (usually a match or an update on transfer negotiations), so you can whizz through a whole season in half a day. Just like old times.

There are three methods of play – a standard game, Challenge Mode, or Quick Play. In Challenge you're set a particular goal such as avoiding relegation or winning the title with a nominated club. The game ends when you complete the objective or are sacked trying. In Quick Play you can play three seasons before the game is up, which is ultimately pointless; you could use standard play and give yourself the option to continue past that cut-off point.

The overall layout of the game is pleasantly simple, with the day-to-day options in a toolbar at the top of the screen, and controlled by taps on the shoulder buttons. When looking at any club this enables you to flick between Squad, Information, Fixtures and Transfers in an instant. On a match day you can keep tabs on your sides' player ratings, the 2D pitch, and the current table all at once. And you can bring up further menus such as clubs, competitions, and transfer options.

## Fantasy football

For all the likeable aesthetics, a question mark hangs over the game's realism. We're puzzled by the transfer market. As boss of Palace (someone has to do it), we offered reserve forward Wayne Andrews to all Championship and League One clubs and nearly all made a bid! More

amazement followed as we offered  
£155k for first choice Everton keeper  
Nigel Martyn and the Toffees accepted.

Gusto insist that surprise transfers like the latter are included because they do happen in real life; think Owen to Newcastle or Van der Meyde to Everton. We remain dubious. More worrying is the match engine – while the tactics screens are easy to navigate and offer great depth, you never really feel in control, particularly if looking at the 2D view. Changing your passing style from Direct

to Long might have an effect on the game's back-end mechanics, but it's not one that's obvious while watching a match. Better to switch to Overview, follow the commentary, and use your imagination; but this is only possible if the match speed is set to 'slow', as the text can't keep up with anything faster. ■

## VERDICT

Even with its glitches, *Champ Man* serves up an absorbing round of footy management on-the-move. Our faith is restored – for now

6



**A question mark hangs over the realism... we offered Palace reserve Wayne Andrews to all Championship and League One clubs and nearly all made a bid!**

Manchester United

1st in Premier Division

Fri, 11/11/05

Liverpool

10th in Premier Division

Fri, 11/11/05

Crystal Palace

10th in Championship

Wed, 03/11/05

Profile
Information
Contract
Form
History

## Wayne Rooney

Forward (Centre), Age 20 8

### Statistics 9-6-7-8-8

	Apps	GS	Assts	Yel	Red	Tck	Pass	SoT	Av R
Non-Competitive	1 (1)	0	0	0	0	100	75%	80%	6.60
Reserves	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
League	7 (3)	2	0	0	0	100	71%	78%	7.40
Cup	3 (1)	1	0	0	0	2.66	81%	87%	7.60
Competitive	10 (4)	3	0	0	0	150	76%	80%	7.40

Profile
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History

**Peter Crouch**  
Striker (Centre), Age 24 15

**Technical**

**Mentality**

**Physical**

**Temperament**

**Attacking**

**Defensive**

**Condition**

**Attacking +/-**

Crossing	11
Dribbling	11
Shooting	14
Passing	10
Movement	11
Confidence	15
Creativity	12
First Touch	13
Acceleration	11
Anticipation	11
Heading	13

Form: 7  
Pref Foot: R  
Bans: None

Value: £6,000,000  
Wages: £26,000  
Expres: 01.06.09

Transfer listed:   
Listed for loan:

Profile
Information
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Form
History

## Andrew Johnson

Striker (Centre), Age 24 8

### Recent Games

	Pass	Tck	Dts	SoT	Cond	Miss	Pld	Rat	GS
Tue, 08/11/05 Stoke	26	33	68	22	26	90	9	1	
Sat, 05/11/05 Luton	68	18	87	23	28	90	7	0	
Sat, 29/10/05 Cardiff	60	31	79	25	20	90	7	0	
Tue, 25/10/05 Leicester	Off 82	27	16	15	28	30	82	5	0
Sat, 22/10/05 Hull	Unused Substitute								
Sat, 15/10/05 Watford	Unused Substitute								
Sat, 13/08/05 Burnley	Inj 55	80	33	63	33	16	55	8	1
Wed, 10/08/05 QPR	Off 65	90	36	82	70	41	65	9	3
Sat, 06/08/05 Luton		35	19	90	35	24	90	9	4
Sat, 30/07/05 Charlton		23	20	87	33	15	90	7	0
Sat, 23/07/05 Southend		62	23	93	33	24	60	9	1
Tue, 19/07/05 Brentford		78	31	77	33	74	90	9	0

Profile
Information
Contract
Form
History

Actions
Continue

Actions
Continue

Actions
Continue

Actions
Continue

Actions
Continue

Actions
Continue

Actions
Continue

### Checking the stats on three of our favourite Premiership strikers – Rooney, Crouch and Johnson

## IN-DEPTH

**Pros:** That classic Championship Manager feel is back!

**Cons:** We have real concerns over the game's realism

**Graphics:** All text but at least it's clearly presented

**Sound:** Horrifically catchy lift music

**Gameplay:** Imperfect yet certainly playable, and fun

**Lifespan:** Plenty of depth to keep you coming back



# TOKOBOT

LITTLE ROBOTS GO WILD ON LITTLE PLAYSTATION

● Publisher: Take 2 ● Developer: Tecmo ● Price: £29.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: No ● Downloads: No

We've long suspected life would be easier if we had an army of tiny robots to help us traverse chasms, defeat enemies and fix drinks. But where are all the little helper droids that *Tomorrow's World* has been promising since episode one? Helping out a lucky sod called Bolt, that's where. A young adventurer exploring the just-discovered ruins of an ancient civilisation, Bolt finds the Tokobots and realises that these miniature robotic marvels are the key to uncovering its secrets.

A platform game with a strong emphasis on solving puzzles, here everything is achieved through manipulation of your Tokobot legions. A button press switches the formation of your 'bots, enabling you to use them for different tasks. A vertical formation turns the droids into a trailing line which can be used as a ladder to reach ledges, a bridge to cross platforms, or a whip to lash at your enemies. Press again and you'll change to a horizontal, arms-out formation that's ideal for spinning the Tokobots like a roundabout and battering into bad guys.



**A vertical formation turns the droids into a trailing line which can be used as a ladder to reach ledges, a bridge to cross platforms, or a whip to lash enemies**

## IN-DEPTH

TOKOBOT

**Pros:** Original concept, thoughtful level design

**Cons:** Flaky AI and formation changes a spot time-consuming

**Graphics:** Cute, colourful and appealing game world

**Sound:** A jaunty, jazzy score propels you along

**Gameplay:** A clever but flawed riff on platform gaming

**Lifespan:** But where are the multiplayer options?

9

9

7

6



### Pain in the 'bot

All this formation business is very clever. Unfortunately, innovation often brings its own set of problems. Having to link the Tokobots before they can act is daft. If you're being attacked from all sides on a crowded platform there often isn't time to hit the required button combination and you just end up getting leathered.

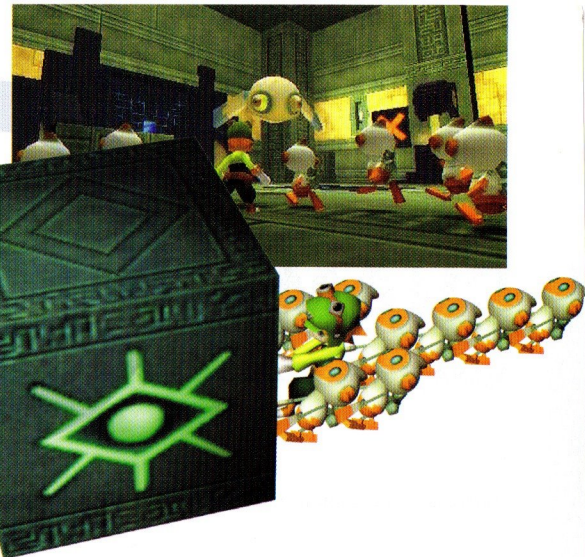
The Tokobots' AI also feels underdeveloped. The little guys regularly

get left behind, and although they eventually respawn, it's not much consolation when you're stood twiddling your thumbs while a Humpty Dumpty-esque enemy repeatedly nuts you. Niggles aside, *Tokobot* is a quirky, original take on platforming. The basic premise is hugely appealing and if Tecmo can iron out a few control issues, the sequel could be something special. Think of this as a work in progress. ■

### VERDICT

It's good to see developers trying something new but this is more of a solid template for a sequel than a top game in its own right

6



The whip-cracking vertical formation is your best means of attack (top). You'll need special combinations to win the boss battles (middle) The puzzles will require some real lateral thinking (below)




# HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE

VOLDEMORT? WE HAVE **HARRY POTTER** IN THE PALM OF OUR HAND...

● Publisher: Electronic Arts ● Developer: EA ● Price: £34.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: Yes ● Downloads: No

Parents – this one's for you. For the price of a PSP and a copy of *The Goblet Of Fire*, you can virtually guarantee docile, compliant children during all those tedious but obligatory visits to Grandma. And it saves you doping them up to the expectant, trusting eyeballs with Haribo.

Based on the film of the fourth Potter doorstep, *Goblet* sees EA's polished gameplay sausage maker squeezing out bite-sized links of entertaining wizard action along with a cluster of mini-

 **A familiar blend of exploration, puzzling, item gathering and magical combat. It's not hard, but there's a decent lick of pace**

games, scores of collectables, and the opportunity to play through the movie's events solo or better still, with two PSP-owning mates via WiFi.

Graphically, the game has clearly benefited from collaboration with the producers of the movie, rendered in bright, dramatic detail. Add sparkling cut-scene narration by Potter audio-book regular Stephen Fry and *Goblet* certainly conjures the right feel in every way.

As for the gameplay, it's a familiar blend of exploration, puzzling, item



gathering and magical combat. It's not hard, but there's a decent lick of pace, enough variety, and rewards aplenty. In the end, OPS2's sorting hat announces that *Goblet Of Fire* is destined for nice, dependable but unremarkable Hufflepuff. Bold Gryffindor? Maybe next year... ■

## VERDICT

While not startlingly fresh, *Goblet Of Fire* feels made for the PSP format, rattling along enjoyably. One for the kids, though, adults

7

If the idea of taking on Voldemort with two friends over WiFi doesn't even slightly pique the excitement of your inner child, we hereby declare you dead inside



At night, young Potter stole out of Hogwarts to commit random acts of arson (above). Test your Tarot skills in a cards-on-the-table side game (left)

## IN-DEPTH HARRY POTTER

**Pros:** Faithful to the film, difficulty pitched perfectly to kids

**Cons:** Nothing here you won't have seen before, done better

**Graphics:** Epic Potter on pint-sized PSP

7

**Sound:** Stylish sound gives *Goblet* a movie feel

8

**Gameplay:** Good variety but feeling a little tired

6

**Lifespan:** No shortage of magic for the muggles

7



# KEY OF HEAVEN

WORKING TITLE: KEY TO LINDSAY LOHAN'S BEDROOM

● Publisher: Sony ● Developer: Sony ● Price: £34.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: Yes ● Downloads: Yes



Hand-to-hand combat is easier if you're friends with a couple of whirlwinds (above). Graphics are lush, even by PSP's high standards (right)



Playing *Key Of Heaven* is a little like repeatedly thrusting your arm into a lucky dip filled with equal numbers of gold nuggets and emperor scorpions. There's no doubting that there's treasure to be had, but you're unlikely to be too enthusiastic about trying to find it.

First the good news: *KOH* is a fresh PSP RPG (as opposed to a PSone retread). Better yet, it jettisons squished character design and isometric perspective in favour of normal-looking heroes and a slick 3D camera. The combat's all unleashed in real time too, and based on a compelling system of collectible attack



**Navigating the poorly signposted world is a chore, the spells your hero can learn are too powerful, and the blocking system is infuriatingly slow**

## IN-DEPTH

KEY OF HEAVEN

**Pros:** Real time combat, trade moves like Panini stickers over WiFi

**Cons:** Exhausting to navigate, combat a doddle

**Graphics:** Effort has been taken, and it shows

**Sound:** Good music and decent voice acting

**Gameplay:** Plenty of action but little variety

**Lifespan:** You'll run out of patience before game

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elements that slot together to make personalised combos. You can even trade your unique moves via WiFi and download exclusive combo elements.

Sadly, the good news peters out after that. Navigating the poorly signposted world is a chore, the spells your hero can learn are too powerful, and the blocking system is infuriatingly slow and unreliable. Worst of all, no matter how clever your custom combo is, it only uses a single button to activate - which totally removes any skill. Hmmm. Anyone for a lucky dip? ■

## VERDICT

*Key Of Heaven* is an action RPG with a couple of genuinely good ideas, but they're lost in a flurry of game-hobbling annoyances

5

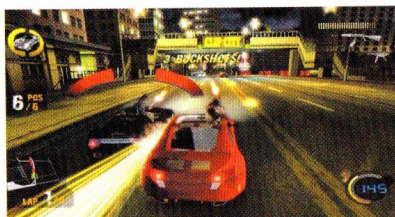
Real-time combat is still something of a rarity in the RPG world. Perhaps it's because, as here, it's usually a bit rubbish



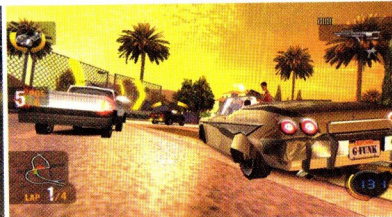
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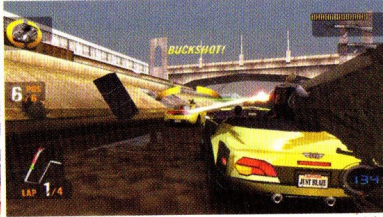
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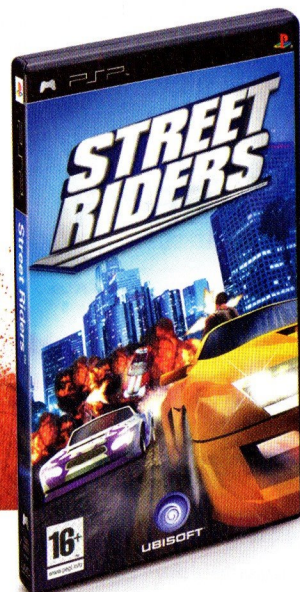


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UBISOFT®



# WWE SMACKDOWN! VS RAW 2006

**BIG MEN, IN TIGHT PANTS, ON THE SMALL SCREEN**

● Publisher: THQ ● Developer: Yukes ● Price: £34.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: Yes ● Downloads: No

Another month, another carbon copy port from PS2 to PSP. While playing your favourite title on the go is unquestionably ace, is it really worth forking out 80 quid on two games that are effectively the same? *SmackDown! Vs Raw 2006* doesn't provide an answer, but it does add fuel to a debate that's already toasty hot.

## TIME TO PLAY THE GAME

Handheld *SmackDown!* is pretty much exactly the same as its console counterpart. Sure, the graphics are occasionally so square that the characters look like Lego Wrestlers, and

It's an issue that the developer has tried to tackle with a gathering of PSP-exclusives. Most prominent is arcade mode, a series of basic mini-games like Eugene Airplane Race, where you guide everyone's favourite 'special' wrestler to the ring without him falling over (see 'Eugenius').

Arcade mode's saving grace is Texas Hold 'Em: poker on the go, played with and against WWE superstars. Naturally, it's all camped up to the max. Select from one of four facial expressions for your wrestler before each round in an attempt to bluff your table mates into folding. It takes a while to become familiar with the

**THE INCLUSION OF JAKE 'THE SNAKE' ROBERTS COMES WITH FANFARE - ONCE YOU'VE UNLOCKED HIM YOU CAN PORT HIM OVER TO PS2 AND USE HIM THERE TOO**

commentary has been lost in the transition, but they're just about the only major contrasts. New additions to the series like momentum and stamina meters are in, along with new faces, title matches, season mode, unlockable arenas and legends. Good things, no doubt - but they feature in both PSP and PS2 versions, so how can you justify shelling out for the pair?

rules, but you'll soon find yourself whiling away hours trying to bankrupt the eternally smug JBL.

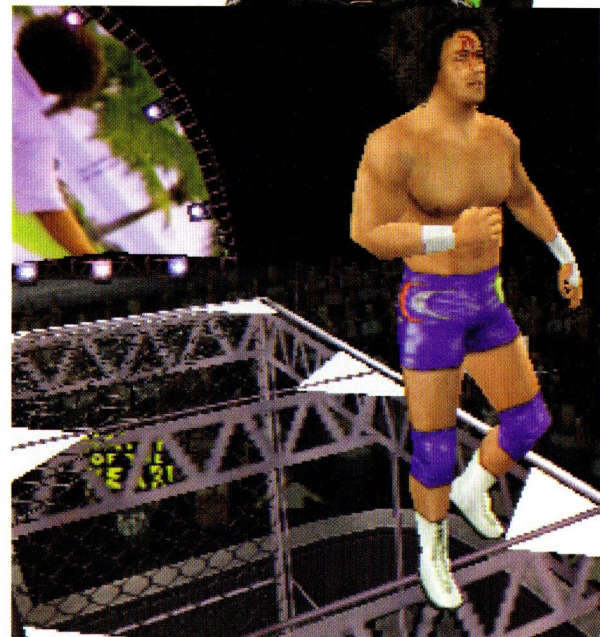
PSP *SmackDown!* features another significant exclusive: additional character Jake 'The Snake' Roberts. Older readers will know him as the deceitful chap who once had his pet serpent chomp on 'Macho Man' Randy Savage's arm. His inclusion comes with fanfare, and rightly so - particularly as once you've unlocked him you can port him over to PS2 and use him there too.

## THAT'S NOT COOL

The grappling itself isn't quite as accomplished on PSP. Chain wrestling - where you can reverse punches and holds by pressing buttons - still looks and feels like a real match. Trouble is, these



Trish Stratus Lays out rival Christy with a chick kick to the noggin. Ladies!



suspiciously muscled lunks turn more leisurely than their PS2 buddies, so at times you find yourself throwing moves into thin air. Trying to regain stamina by tapping the buttons feels awkward, too. But impressive is the total lack of slowdown, even in matches like Armageddon Hell In The Cell, where six wrestlers go 'at it' inside a massive cage.

One plus point of the direct port is Season mode. It's exactly like its console counterpart, right down to cut-scenes featuring storylines penned by real WWE writers. This means you can take your current game wherever you go via the wonders of USB, dip in for a quick match or two, then load it back onto your PlayStation 2 when you get home.

It's no surprise that THQ has stuck to a winning formula for the series' handheld debut. Only hardcore fans really need to own the game on both platforms, but *SmackDown! Vs Raw 2006* has bridged the gap from PS2 to PSP better than most. ■

## VERDICT

If you don't already own the PS2 game, this is a must-have. If you do, then it's not quite so essential, but a quality grappler nonetheless

8

## IN-DEPTH

WWE SMACKDOWN

**Pros:** Packed with features, exclusive characters, PS2 compatibility

**Cons:** Controls not quite as smooth as its PS2 daddy

**Graphics:** Blocky at times, but still striking

**Sound:** No commentary, generic grunge sounds

**Gameplay:** Tried-and-trusted grap goodness

**Lifespan:** WWE 24/7? We're up to the challenge

9

9

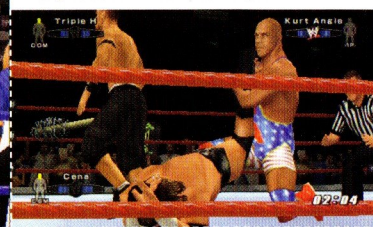
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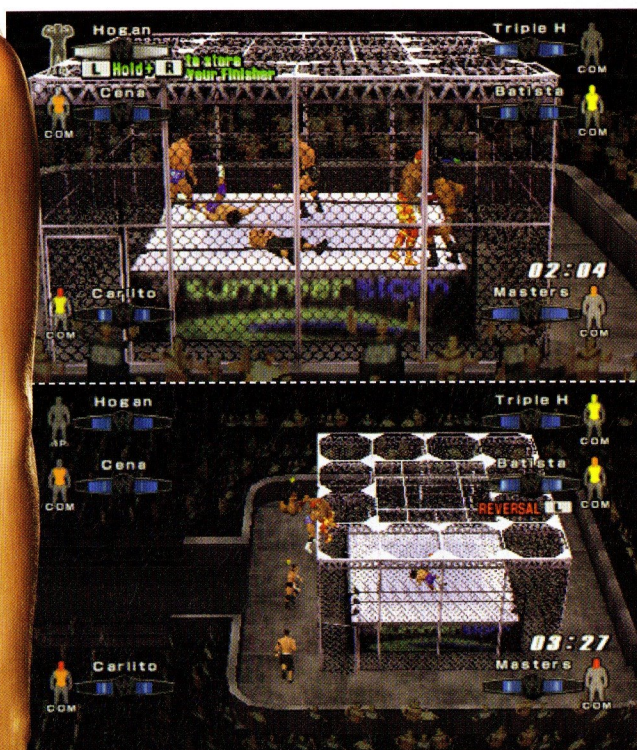
Belts aren't just a status symbol - they're a handy impromptu weapon, as these Lovely Ladies are about to demonstrate (Left). Kurt Angle's devastating ankle-lock is a bitch to get out of (below)



RECOMMENDED  
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Carlito (Left) winning at Armageddon: now that's cool. He might be dressed as a Gay Captain America, but it doesn't mean he has any problems swinging a chair (above)



Armageddon Hell In The Cell pits six wrestlers against each other in a fight... to the death! Or at least a spot of bruising



## Eugenius?

Our guide to completing bonus game Eugene Pug Race. Like you'll need it...

### Step One

The ramp way is all clear; here, you simply tap left and right to control Eugene's balance and prevent him from falling off the edge.

### Step Two

Damn that dastardly deviant Triple H! He's forgotten to put his trademark sledgehammer away. Bear right to avoid it, but don't stumble into the side of the ring.

### Step Three

Usually, ring steps are a handy way of getting from arena floor to squared circle. Not for our Eugene though: he's more likely to trip over them.

### Step Four

A quick step around one inconveniently placed steel chair and you're finished. Well done, Eugene! Now onto something more taxing, like breathing.



# TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 06

POCKET-SIZED **PITCH AND PUTT** FOR THE PSP

● Publisher: Electronic Arts ● Developer: Electronic Arts ● Price: £34.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: Yes ● Downloads: No

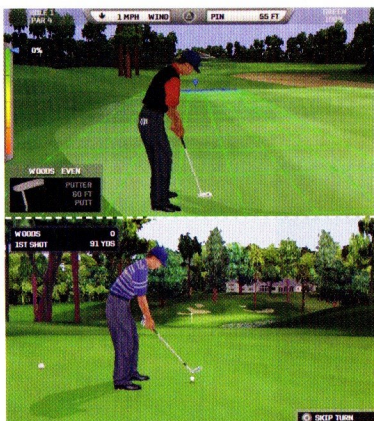
**K**er-ching. That's the sound that echoes through Tiger Woods' palatial mansion whenever a new console – and thus a new chance to pimp his deservedly successful golfing franchise – launches. The PS2 version of *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 06* received a healthy 8/10 in *Official PS2 Magazine* – and sure enough this is a lot like that, which in turn was a lot like *Tiger Woods 05*.

But it's impossible to berate Woods' conservatism, simply because the core game is so solid and playable. It's the sensible, feature-packed option that real golf fans go for because they don't fancy the big-headed look of *Everybody's Golf*.

So how does the PSP version of *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 06* stack up against its PS2 sibling? The analogue stick control system – upon which the series' intuitive play is built – is still here, albeit with



**The visuals are admirably squeezed onto the hand-held with a minimal drop in quality, and even the alarmingly absorbing Game Face character creation engine is present**



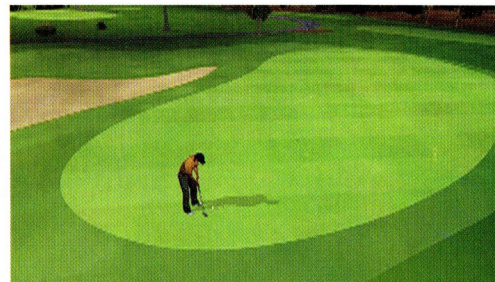
The mini-analogue stick makes it harder to hit a really sweet drive, and PSP's flat nub gives slightly less 'swish'

slightly less 'swish' due to the PSP's flat nub. The visuals are admirably squeezed on to the hand-held with only a minimal drop in quality, and even the alarmingly absorbing Game Face character creation engine is present and correct. And on top of all this there's the wireless play, so you'll be able to tee-off against your mates no matter where you are. Fore! No, only two actually. Oh, Christ... ■

## VERDICT

Still dry as hell and frustrating on occasions, but immensely playable nonetheless. A smart alternative to *Everybody's Golf*

7



Even shrunk down to PSP-o-vision, the game still looks great and is as sensible and feature-packed as any of its predecessors



## IN-DEPTH

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 06

**Pros:** As solid and playable as ever

**Cons:** Lacks surprises

**Graphics:** Retains the brilliantly detailed character models

8

**Sound:** Pleasantly inane American-style golf commentary

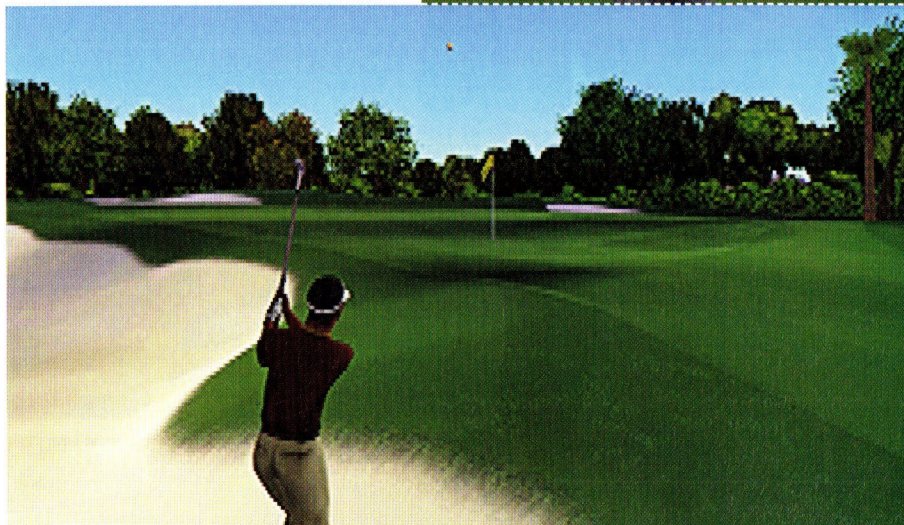
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**Gameplay:** Smooth and straightforward game of golf

8

**Lifespan:** As ever, it'll last until *Tiger 07* rolls around

7



Tiger demolished the small boy's sand castle with extreme prejudice



VIDEOGAME CULTURE

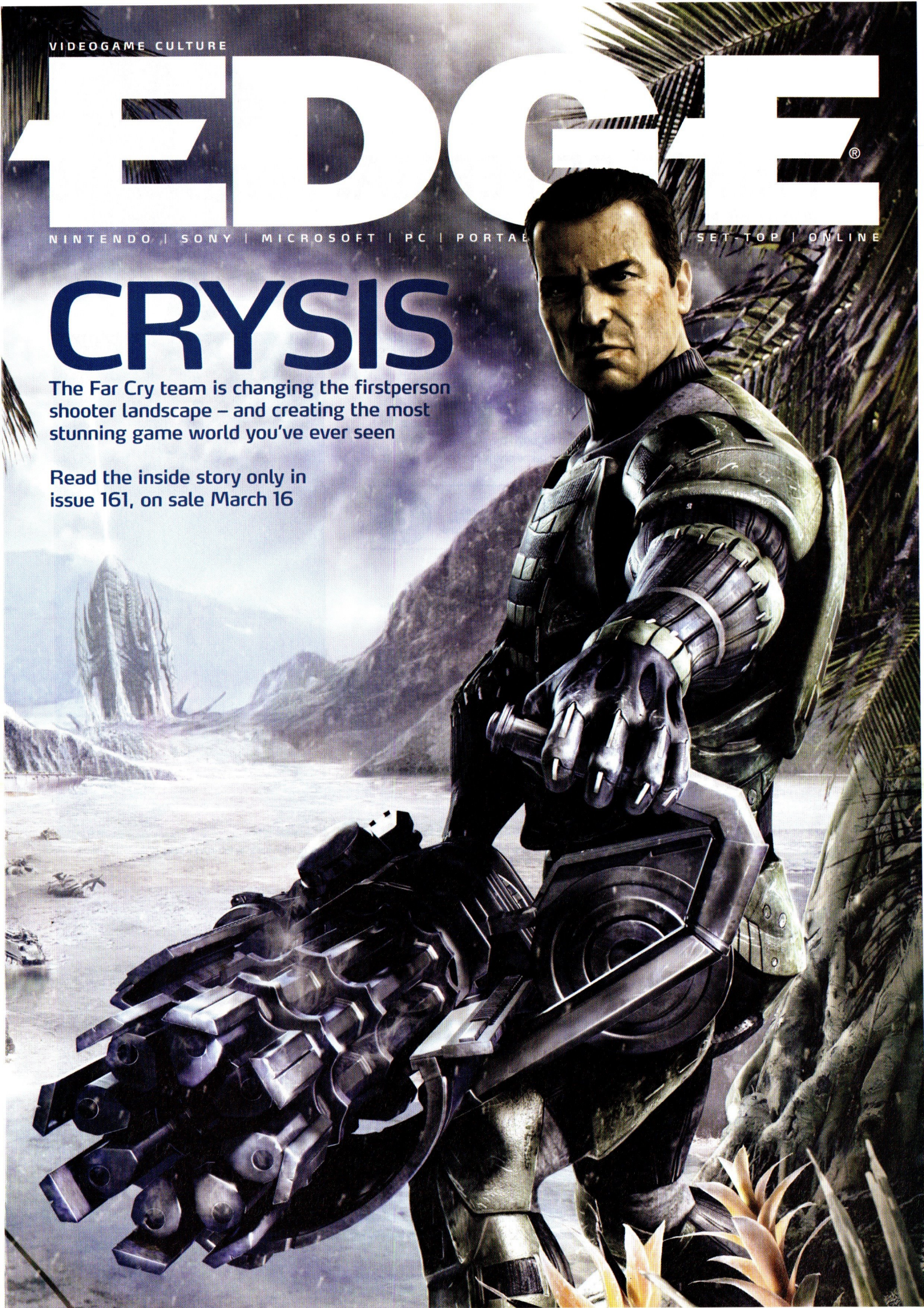
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# PRINCE OF PERSIA: REVELATIONS

REVISIT THE PRINCE'S 'DIFFICULT' **GO**TH PERIOD

● Publisher: Ubisoft ● Developer: Ubisoft Montreal ● Price: £34.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: No ● Downloads: No

Ignore that 'Revelations' bit, because despite the title, this is essentially *Warrior Within*, miniaturised and squeezed onto PSP. It might claim to have new levels, environments and combat moves but you'd be hard pushed to spot any difference. And those of you with good memories might remember we gave the PS2 version a 9 back in 2004. So if this is identical, how come we're only giving it a 6 this time round?

There's nothing wrong with the gameplay; the acrobatic exploration and

bugs. At one point we had a one-legged but otherwise perfectly mobile Prince. Far worse, one level jammed into a loop where we repeatedly died immediately after falling through a solid platform. Shame, because if you can grit your teeth through the problems there's a classic game crying out to be played. ■

## VERDICT

Abundant faults make it impossible to recommend this over the original. Get *Warrior Within* second-hand on PS2 instead

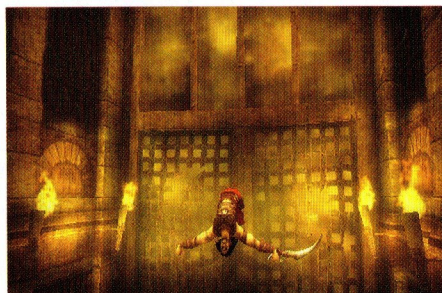
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**It freezes randomly to load during play, sometimes several times in a single room - murder if you're trying to time a jump past a hazard**

combat is as exciting as ever. It looks stunning (despite some impenetrably murky early levels) and both the controls and camera work perfectly. Which is crucial, given the precision needed to navigate obstacles.

Trouble is, it's woefully adapted for PSP. Lengthy re-loads between deaths and a long rambling structure, ill-suited for playing on the go, spoil the experience. It doesn't help that it also freezes randomly to load during play, sometimes several times in a single room - murder if you're trying to time a jump past a hazard. This constant disc access also takes its toll on the battery - two hours gaming can kill it dead. There's also



The athletics look full of Eastern promise (above left) - shame they're interrupted by intrusive loading times. With sinking heart, the prince knew he was due another visit to Ikea (above)

## IN-DEPTH

PRINCE OF PERSIA: REVELATIONS

**Pros:** Gorgeous graphics, responsive controls

**Cons:** Excessive loading time, more bugs than a Temple Of Doom antechamber

**Graphics:** A showboat for PSP's abilities

9

**Sound:** Rarely in synch with the action

6

**Gameplay:** Spoilt by poor loading and checkpoints

6

**Lifespan:** There's a huge adventure to get through

8



Historians have confirmed that racing giant mummies was a popular pastime in ancient Persia



# SPIDER-MAN 2

THIS TIME HE'S THE SMALLEST SWINGER IN TOWN

● Publisher: Activision ● Developer: Vicarious Visions ● Price: £34.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: No ● Downloads: No

Maybe it's some post-modern comment on the duality of the superhero lifestyle, but the *Spider-Man* games have always been pretty schizoid. The wall-crawling stuff rocks because, let's face it, it's the closest you'll ever get to being Spidey. But underneath the freedom of hurtling through the air on silk threads, everything else has always been a bit pap. An average adventure-brawler full of 'go here, press that' missions and the worst boss fights ever. Guess what? This is no different. It's enjoyable in places, but overall a brief, throwaway affair.

*Spider-Man 2* on PSP has lost the *Grand Theft Auto*-style freedom of the

PS2 version, and now you'll instantly be able to notice that web lines attach to mysterious invisible ceilings rather than buildings. But making up for the enclosed, limited environments are the surprisingly friendly controls. You'll be instantly throwing punches, zipping to the ceiling and firing off webs like a pro.

All this web-slinging, baddy-bashing action is fun, but by jimminy it's insubstantial in the long haul. Most missions include big, pointy direction arrows and consist of no more than 'get

from A to B', with the occasional bonus of a 'C' to spice things up. Outside, you're nearly always chasing villains across the New York skyline, and when you finally get to play inside a building you'll be hunting down buttons, switches and/or hostages. It feels like the same things keep repeating over and over again.

*Spider-Man 2* is far from the classic game we were hoping for. It's fun in small doses, and on the move it's not bad for filling brief spare moments. But play it on a long journey and you could finish it



**Outside, you're nearly always chasing villains across the New York skyline. It feels like the same things keep repeating over and over again**



before you reach your destination. Most of the levels are just about entertaining enough to warrant a replay, but it's still too short and too shallow. ■

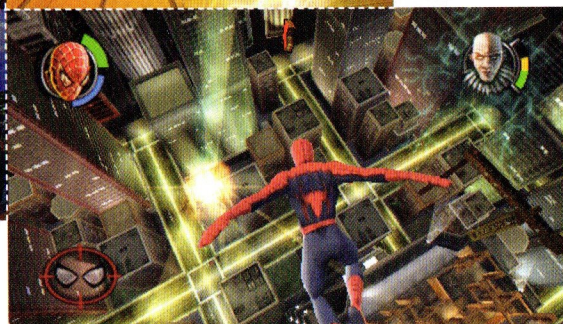
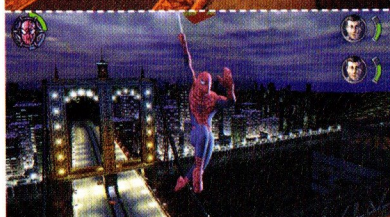
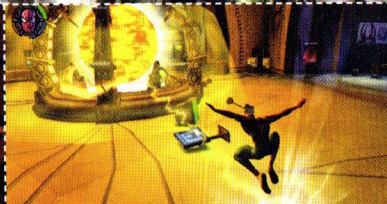
## VERDICT

Fun like fireworks – nice flash but nothing that lasts. It's a light-weight adventure that has good bits, just not enough of them

6



Don't move a muscle! Er, even if you could



What's Spidey swinging from here? A jumbo jet? (above) "I'll just set off the Spiderchute," decided Spidey, forgetting such a thing does not exist (right)

## IN-DEPTH

SPIDER-MAN 2

**Pros:** Controls easy to grasp, instant appeal

**Cons:** Sticky camera adjustments, not enough variety to missions

**Graphics:** Smooth motion, nice animation

**Sound:** Movie voice talent but erratic music

**Gameplay:** Fun in short bursts, but basic and repetitive

**Lifespan:** Not much longer than the film

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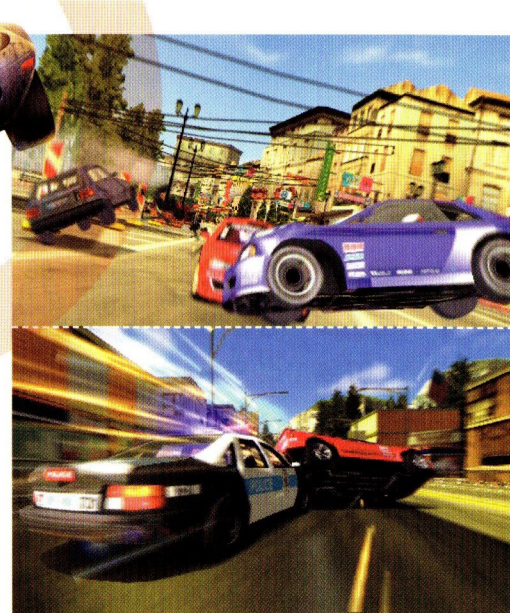
# BURNOUT LEGENDS

A KILLER 'BEST OF' COLLECTION WITH VERY LITTLE FILLER

● Publisher: Electronic Arts ● Developer: Criterion ● Price: £34.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: Yes ● Downloads: No

Arguing with the idea of *Burnout* on PSP is a very tough thing to do, so we won't. However, we will argue a little with the execution of it. But first, the good news. It's very recognisably *Burnout*, and by that we mean it's fast, chaotic and highly entertaining. *Legends* is a compilation of all the best bits, cut 'n' shut pretty damn smoothly. Classic tracks and crash junctions from *Burnout*, *Point Of Impact* and *Takedown* work well with

original was promising, if not a classic, but developer Criterion really upped its game over the years. The proof comes in the content from *Burnout*'s first sequel, *Point Of Impact*, as its tracks still feel inspired. The PSP's springwater-clear screen is also coldly sharp enough to resolve the tiny telltale specks – soon to be enormous onrushing trucks – the whole experience relies on. Even the various pick-up icons are easily distinguishable. The only thing it



High speed, high impact high-resolution graphics and highly entertaining – everything you'd want from a *Burnout* game

while each UMD has a unique selection of five special new cars (taken from a pool of around 20). The only way to unlock the others is to win them in WiFi races, as you can also upload a single-player demo, or one of five tracks for multiplayer races, to non *Legends*-owning friends. That's a great feature we'd like to see more often.

So, complaints? The release of *Revenge* has moved things on, and while this isn't trying to be *Revenge* – though it shares the radio-friendly punk-lite soundtrack – it's hard to go back, and that's exactly what *Legends* feels like, and is – going backwards. There's not enough traffic and small things that could've been fixed, like the awkward Aftertouch camera and lengthy Crash reloads, have been left. These kinks are old, not legendary. So, history repeats itself. Good, but not a classic. Yet. ■



**The PSP feels entirely at home flinging cars and cities around at absurd velocities, and remains as smooth as the necks of Girls Aloud (except the ginger one)**

the large (70+) selection of vehicles, despite them topping out around 30mph higher than when designed. The PSP feels entirely at home flinging cars and cities around at absurd velocities, and remains as smooth as the necks of Girls Aloud (except the ginger one) while doing it. The cars are so willing, in fact, that some courses – such as the extremely twisty Harbour Town from the very first game – require real control to negotiate properly.

That said, it's a little too easy at times to negotiate the oldest tracks badly... the

noticeably lacks is the motion blur while on boost.

The cars (including series icon the Custom Coupe Ultimate, the green tuner car) are a real draw, and you rapidly unlock some real classics from Compact, Muscle, Coupe, Sport, Super and Race Special classes. The progression has been speeded up a little for handheld, for obvious reasons, while the controversial '4X' multiplier has been removed from Crash mode. Too dominating, apparently. Several new cars have been added, including a mental F1-style 'Cop Racer',

## VERDICT

This is an impressive port of the *Burnout* back history. It's (mostly) excellent fun and absolute proof that it works on handheld

8

## IN-DEPTH

### BURNOUT LEGENDS

**Pros:** All the best bits from the first three games, squished into one

**Cons:** Somewhat eclipsed by *Revenge*, and retaining old camera problems

**Graphics:** That familiar, impressive *Burnout* speed

**Sound:** Engines slightly weedy, tunes nicely new

**Gameplay:** Great tracks and co-op, slightly thin traffic

**Lifespan:** Loads of replay from classic *Burnout* tracks

9

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Wahoo! With the best being selected from each of the first three *Burnout* games, you now have more than 70 vehicles to choose from – though you'll soon discover your favourites



# TALES OF ETERNIA

YEAH, WE THOUGHT IT MUST BE A HE-MAN GAME, TOO



● Publisher: UbiSoft ● Developer: Namco ● Price: £34.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: Yes ● Downloads: No

**T**ales Of Eternia is not what it seems. We're not trying to get anyone's hopes up here – it is a stubbornly Japanese RPG, complete with deformed characters and random violence interrupting otherwise relaxing strolls in the country. So on that score, it's very much what it seems. What we mean is that *Tales* isn't new. In fact, it first appeared on PSone back in 2001, where it was well-received, thanks to an interactive real-time combat system – an original feature back then. So, do we



## IN-DEPTH

TALES OF ETERNIA

**Pros:** Good graphics throughout, plus lots of mini-games

**Cons:** Needs serious time if you're going to get the best out of the game

**Graphics:** Old-skool but charming as hell

**Sound:** Plenty of spot-on vocal talent

**Gameplay:** Hands-on combat with some cool adventuring

**Lifespan:** You won't polish this one off in a hurry

7

7

7

7



**A stubbornly Japanese RPG, complete with deformed characters and random violence interrupting otherwise relaxing strolls**

It may not be new but *Tales of Eternia's* heavy stat-management is well-balanced by the hands-on fighting, making for a happily distracting game which will keep you endlessly entertained

smell the fetid gas of a PSP cash-in?

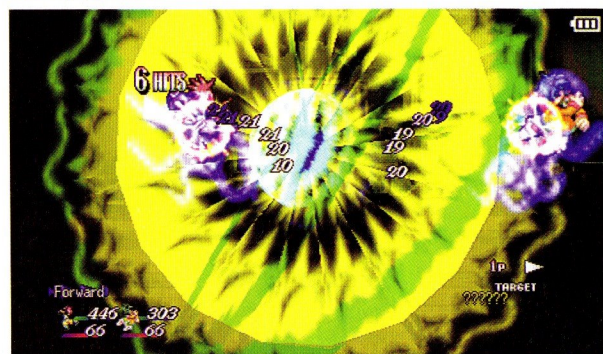
Well, no, actually. While we wouldn't give *Tales* a second glance if the original PSone *Final Fantasy VII* got a rebirth (come on Square, you know you want to), as it stands, this makes for a pleasurable and distracting adventure. The cutesy graphics stand up well in small and widescreen, while the story is as engaging as ever. The game really succeeds, though, because the heavy stat-management is balanced by the

hands-on fighting and a wealth of fun mini-games. Like most RPGs, it's an acquired taste and demands serious time if you're going to get the most from it. But if you're already tiring of all the bitty, fractured PSP gameplay out there, this could fill a hole in your collection nicely. ■

### VERDICT

*Tales Of Eternia* is as old-skool as RPGs get, but in a good way. An enjoyable way to gobble up journey time

7



*Tales of Eternia's* charming old-skool graphics work well in small or widescreen mode and the wealth of mini-games provide hours of seamless gameplay



# VIRTUA TENNIS: WORLD TOUR

VIRTUA TENNIS **SHOOTS UP** THE SEEDINGS

● Publisher: Sega ● Developer: Sumo Digital ● Price: £34.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: Yes ● Downloads: No

Tennis is now cool. Deal with it. First, there was Snoop Dogg name-checking "Venus and Serena at the Wimbledon arena". And now there's this superb game. Here's what you get: a roster of top seeds (Sharapova plus some others) tournaments, exhibition matches, WiFi multiplayer and an involving career mode, World Tour. You also get highly addictive mini-games and a simple but effective setup that enables solo players to play doubles, issuing orders to your partner on the fly.

But all of this is just window dressing to *Virtua Tennis'* killer hook: how it feels

to play. Instead of punishing novices, rookie players will seldom find themselves unable to return a shot, and this makes for fast, exciting games. What is hard however, is finding the ideal court position to make those climactic, game-clinching shots. It's the hunt for these sweet spots, and attempting to wrong-foot opponents, that's the real juice here. Portable *Virtua Tennis* simply feels right. And we mentioned Sharapova, yeah? ■

## VERDICT

*Virtua Tennis* has always been a great sports series, but on PSP it's found its spiritual home. Very enjoyable

8



What's hard is finding the ideal court position to make those game-clinching shots. It's the hunt for these sweet spots that's the real juice here



Either centre court has been invaded by *Tetris* and *Bubble Bobble*, or this is the training mode

## IN-DEPTH

VIRTUA TENNIS

**Pros:** Accessible gameplay. One-player doubles is a nice touch

**Cons:** Not quite so easy to ogle lovely tennis ladies on tiny screen

**Graphics:** Sun-baked courts and great animation

**Sound:** Music is a little grating. Great SFX though

**Gameplay:** Against AI or on WiFi this is gripping

**Lifespan:** It'll last as long as you love tennis

8

7

8

8



It's all about finding the right spot to wrong-foot your opponent



# SSX ON TOUR

THE MOUNTAIN AIR SMELLS BETTER ON PSP

● Publisher: Electronic Arts ● Developer: EA Big ● Price: £34.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: Yes (1-4) ● Downloads: No

Still debating whether you need a PSP? *SSX On Tour* provides the perfect reason why you need to fill that 170x74mm gap in your life. And quickly. Admittedly, guiding your board (or skis) down the 15 different slopes takes a little practice, particularly as on PSP some of the buttons perform dual actions – like **△**, which is used for board presses on the ground but grabs in the air – and it's very easy to crash out by accidentally attempting a trick in two inches of air, when you actually meant to trigger a speed boost. But after five minutes or so, it starts making perfect sense.

The D-pad is used to spin or flip in the air while the analogue stick controls your

direction, meaning you can't swerve to avoid obstacles if you're winding up a jump with the D-pad. As soon as you manage to get your head around that, *SSX On Tour* becomes a totally outstanding game to play. Even the more complex slopes barrel along at high speed, and the huge drops still have that oh-my-God-that's-high feeling you get from the PS2 version.

We actually prefer this version of *SSX On Tour* to its bigger brother. The courses are considerably better, with more routes



You'll never believe that such gorgeous visuals can be created on such a teeny handheld gaming system. It looks ace



and fewer annoyingly unavoidable obstacles to smack into, and the trick



**SSX On Tour is a totally outstanding game to play. Even the more complex slopes barrel along, and the huge drops have that oh-my-God-that's-high feeling**

system is far more challenging and satisfying without the monkey-brained 'trickstick'. Worth your money? Do mountain wolves crap in the pines? ■

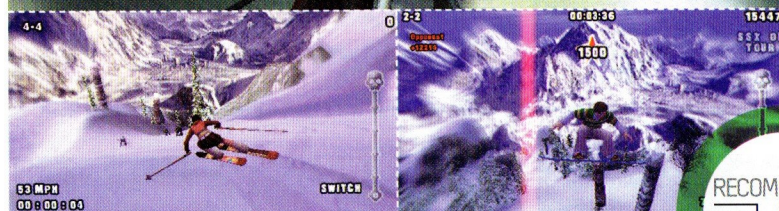
## VERDICT

It's fast, it's fun and it looks amazing – *SSX On Tour* might not be a revolution in snowboarding games, but we still love it

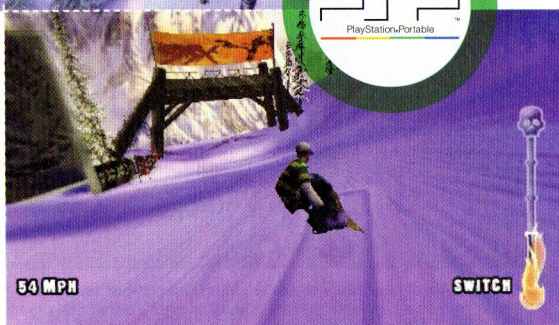
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Some of the jumps and drops in the game are huge



We prefer the snowboards to the skis, but it's still brilliant to have the option to slide down the side of a mountain on two planks instead of just one



RECOMMENDED  
PlayStation Portable

## IN-DEPTH

SSX ON TOUR

**Pros:** Big courses with loads of routes, excellent trick system

**Cons:** If you don't like snowboarding then this probably isn't the game for you

**Graphics:** Crisp, smooth and fresh like mountain snowflakes

**Sound:** Over 40 songs on the soundtrack, and they're mostly good

**Gameplay:** Once you get the hang of it, it's brilliant

**Lifespan:** Enough of a challenge to keep you going for a while





# Megaman Maverick Hunter X

PLATFORM GAMING'S 'NEARLY MAN' MISSES OUT AGAIN

● Publisher: Capcom ● Developer: Capcom ● Price: £34.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: No ● Downloads: No

There's no reason why this retro-remake of the original SNES game shouldn't work. It ought to be a lightning-fast side-scrolling shooter, testing your reflexes as your thumbs dance across the PSP's buttons, avoiding bullets and blasting enemies. But it's not. Instead it's a slog, hauling your unwieldy hero left to right while repeatedly blasting anything that staggers into view.

The problem is, for a rogue-robot policing superhero, Megaman is ill-equipped for the job.

angles you can't avoid.

The game's one redeeming feature is that it looks great. The crisp, new 3D makeover contains some imaginative end-of-level bosses and vibrant backgrounds. It's just a shame that the action hasn't been given a modern update as well. ■

## VERDICT

Megaman's slow, limited range of movement and attacks make his game a frustrating play that never comes close to being fun

4



**For a rogue-robot policing superhero, Megaman is ill-equipped for the job. He's slow, can't duck, and only shoots in the direction he's facing**

equipped for the job. He's slow, can't duck, and only shoots in the direction he's facing. Trying to hit anything that doesn't walk in front of your gun involves all sorts of arsing about as you run away, turn around to shoot, then run away some more. There's no real skill or finesse to it. Each linear level simply involves bludgeoning your way past repetitively spawning robo-bats that hover frustratingly out of range and attack at

## IN-DEPTH

MEGAMAN MAVERICK HUNTER X

**Pros:** Bright, colourful graphics and some good end-of-level bosses

**Cons:** Mindless action, linear level design, clunky controls

**Graphics:** Beautifully sharp, detailed and inventive 3D

**Sound:** Cheesy acting and chugga-chugga rawk music

**Gameplay:** Retro in the worst possible meaning of the word

**Lifespan:** Unlockables, but short, tedious levels that aren't much fun

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Mega Man should be an all-purpose ass-kicking superhero. Instead he handles like a shopping trolley. With a missing wheel



Three examples of Mega Man's extensive aiming capabilities: immediately in front of you (above), straight in front of you (top right), and directly in front of you (right). Sniper Alley this ain't



# PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG

ALTERNATIVE TITLE: 'KONG GOES WRONG'

● Publisher: Ubisoft ● Developer: Ubisoft Montpellier ● Price: £34.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: No ● Downloads: No

Let's say you've created possibly the best console movie tie-in ever. Adapting its brilliance for PSP would be a doddle, right?

For a kick-off you'd do the best you could to adapt the two-stick first-person shooter controls to a nudge stick and four face buttons, co-opted to act like a D-pad. You'd do this but privately acknowledge that the face buttons are spaced just too far apart for them to work as an intuitive set-up during the often-twitchy combat. You'd then edit an already short game (six or seven hours) down, isolating the lead, Jack Driscoll and removing any hint of the collaborative,

film-crew-in-peril dynamic that fuelled the original game's tension - so it's just you, all alone, fighting through Skull Island. You'd then introduce crippling slow-down into the sections that have you controlling Kong, and remove a number of the show-stopping set-piece battles. Finally, you'd reproduce the beautiful, filmic graphics using brightness levels that combine with a low-contrast green/brown/grey colour palette to

render much of the experience impossible to see in anything approaching natural light. That's what you'd do, right?

What do you mean that sounds like a stupid idea? ■

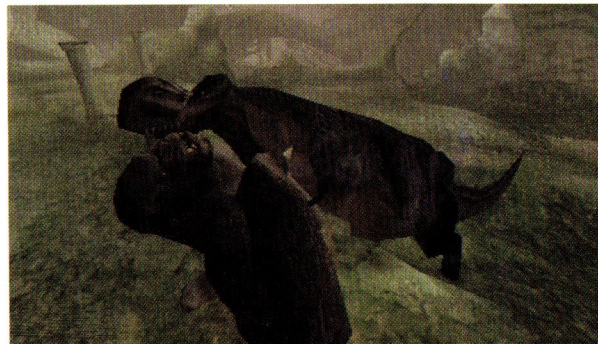
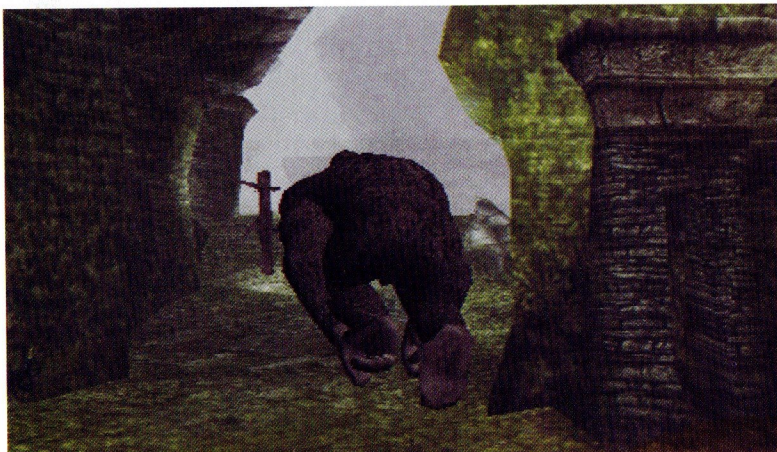
## VERDICT

An ambitious attempt to shoehorn the epic PS2 game into the PSP, ruined by editing, unfriendly controls and gloomy graphics

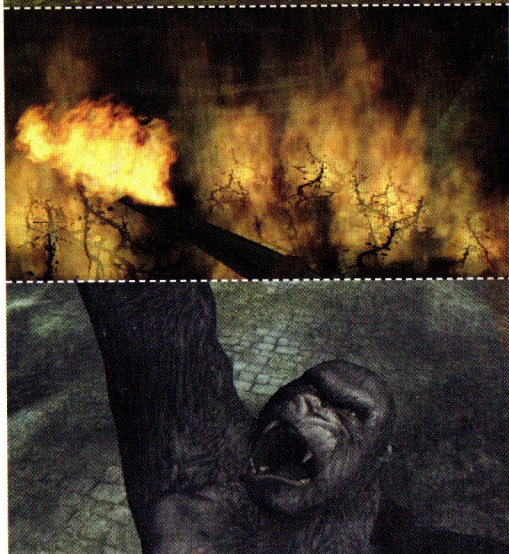
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The face buttons are spaced just too far apart for them to work as an intuitive set-up during the often-twitchy combat



These graphics could be great, but we'll need a flashlight to tell for sure



\*Was not beauty that killed this beast, but poor controls and an excess of slowdown



## IN-DEPTH

PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG

**Pros:** Huge monkey. Real big monkey. Er, that's about it

**Cons:** Too dark, fiddly controls, and over far too quickly

**Graphics:** Moss greens in twilight are hard to see

**Sound:** A great score. It jumps a bit though

**Gameplay:** Dodgy controls and relentless darkness

**Lifespan:** Shorter than the short PS2 game

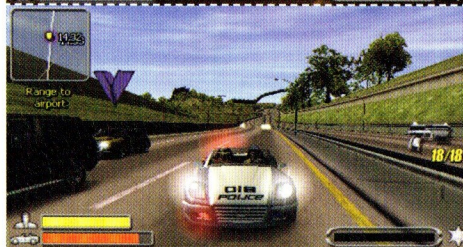
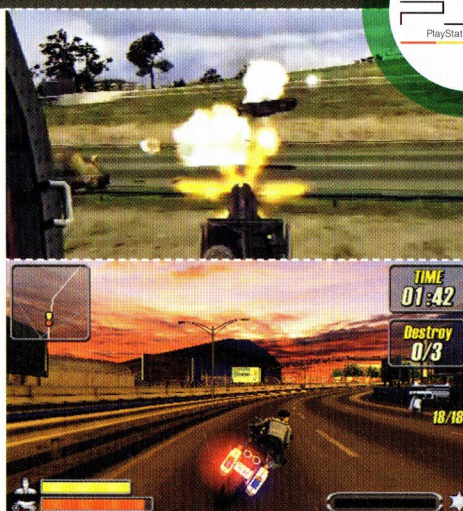
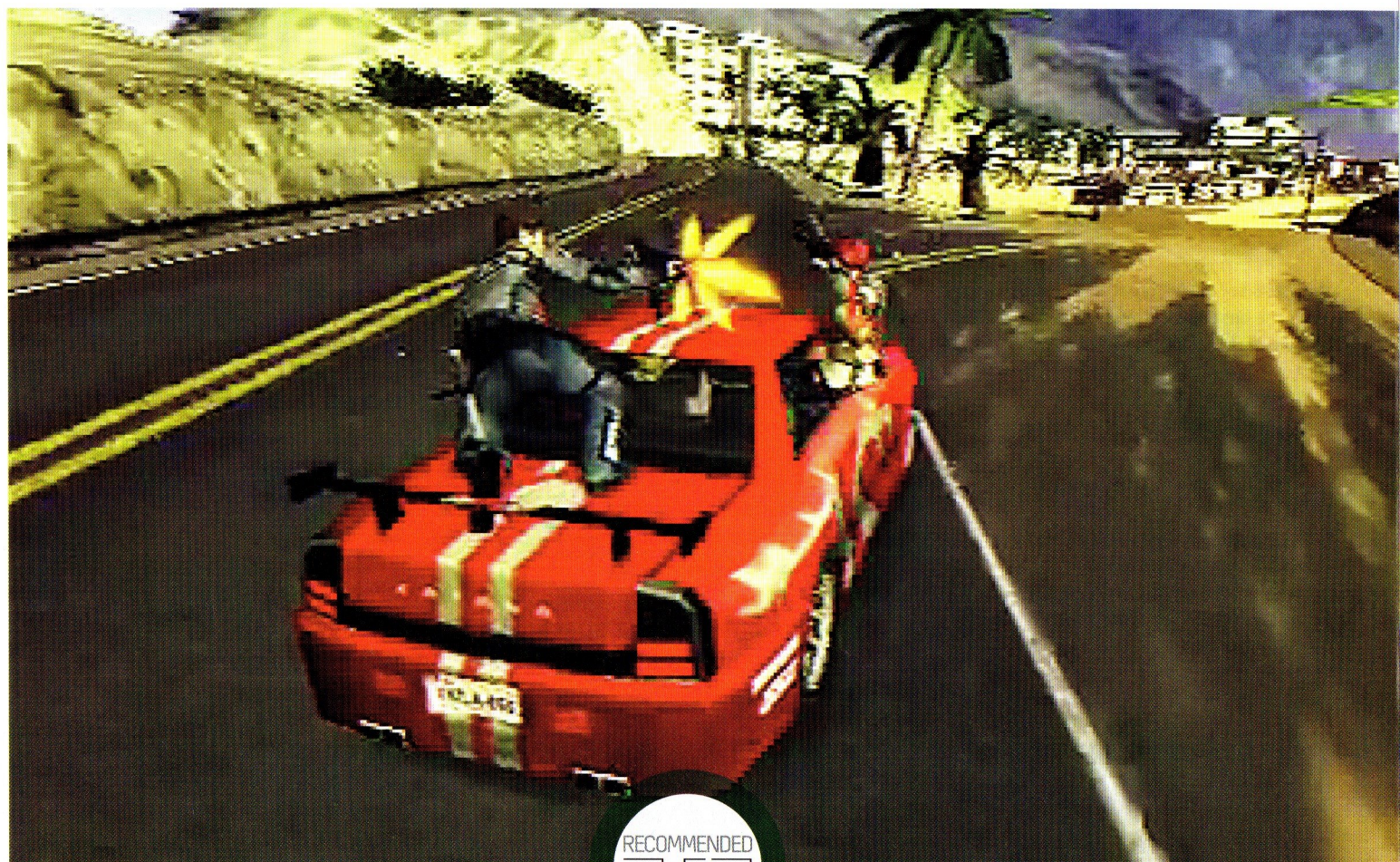
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Of course I'm angry - you've been dragging me for the last six miles (above). You can take out the perps on four wheels, or on two legs (left). Fancy a new motor? Hop on the bonnet, cap the driver and it's yours (bottom left)



# PURSUIT FORCE

NICE CAR. THINK I'LL TAKE IT

● Publisher: Sony ● Developer: Bigbig ● Price: £34.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: No ● Downloads: No No

**P**ursuit Force is a head-on, no survivors collision between *Burnout* and *Grand Theft Auto* - a hyper-kinetic ride that doesn't let off the pace for a second.

This is a game based around one concept - 'what if you could hop between cars while playing *GTA* instead of having to stop and get out?' - creating one of the PSP's most fresh and thrilling play experiences yet. The whole thing is shamelessly shallow, focused solely on the act of hunting down the baddies in the most spectacular way possible. Jumping between cars is effortless and therefore punchy and satisfying - you simply press the right button when next to an enemy car (and when an on-screen icon pops up) and you're either on their bonnet shooting at the driver, or straight behind the wheel.

As you play - for a change - a law-keeper rather than breaker, you're accompanied throughout by the Justice meter. Take villains out efficiently and it tops up, drive badly or shoot at innocent drivers and it falls. When it's full, you tap a key for a boost of health, or save it for a slow-mo sure-shot jump between cars, so you're obviously encouraged to play good cop rather than bad cop.

As for the driving, the vibe is very much *Burnout* with guns, but you'll also get to drive speedboats, be the gunner in an armed helicopter, race motorbikes and even chase down the odd crim on foot. Not even *Burnout* can match that.

What *Burnout* does have, though, is a perfectly implemented handling model, which *Pursuit Force* doesn't quite manage. It's not as precise as it needs to be, and corners, especially the really tight ones, feel tricky without practice. We've another niggle, too: the Justice meter is far from just, unfairly penalising you for doing wrong if you get involved in a vehicular 'mishap' with a civilian, even if it was caused by an enemy car knocking them in your way and thus unavoidable.

But you can forgive what would have been otherwise fatal flaws due to the sheer scope of the game itself and the



The sight of a distant funfair was all it took to distract us from the incredible violent, high-speed matters at hand



**Take villains out efficiently and the Justice meter tops up, drive badly or shoot at innocent drivers and it falls. You're encouraged to play Good Cop**

constant flashes of brilliance throughout. Mission design is hugely varied, segmented into a mix of stages that shake up the game's own 'Chase them down!' formula long before it gets tired.

One extraordinary mission that sticks in our mind has you trailing an assassin for the first third, with a gauge telling you to keep your distance. Once you're given the go ahead to engage him and subsequently scare him away from his target, you jump onto the water for a speedboat chase - during which the sniper's rifle sight dances across the screen tracking you, so you have to slow down and swerve to save your life. While you're shooting at him. It's ingenious, and brilliance like this is common, making those flaws bearable. Forgivable.



Start panicking now - that's you in the sniper's crosshairs

Forgettable, even.

It's the sum of all the parts that matters here, and that sum is terrific. It's a shame the Justice meter sometimes doles out some unjust decisions. But this is still a precious must-have PSP game, trailing only behind *Ridge Racer*, *Lumines*, and *GTA*. Good company indeed. ■

## VERDICT

This is extraordinary stuff. Our excitement is only slightly dampened by inconsistent driving and sudden difficulty spikes

8

## IN-DEPTH

### PURSUIT FORCE

**Pros:** High-speed car theft, involving missions, hot chicks (see left)

**Cons:** Ironically, Justice meter occasionally unfair

**Graphics:** Excellently rendered cities and roads

**Sound:** Ace. Growly engines! Dramatic music!

**Gameplay:** Classic concept, with bearable flaws

**Lifespan:** Plenty of replay value and unlockables

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# EXIT

PINT-SIZED PUZZLER SHOWS BOREDOM THE DOOR

● Publisher: Ubisoft ● Developer: Taito ● Price: £34.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: No ● Downloads: Yes

The idea behind this clever action puzzler is to guide your escapologist – called Mr Esc. – to the exit door in over 100 side-on, scrolling levels. One idea, but the obstacles in your way are many and varied: fire, electricity, smoke, deadly drops, unstable flooring, conveyor belts, timed locks, and so on.

Brilliantly, levels also contain people that you have to rescue and lead to safety, and they can be ordered to stay put, follow you or fetch items and use

them. However, the bulky adults can't climb, children will need to be lifted and some people are injured and need carrying. Bloody lazies.

Reconciling these environmental and human factors with a cerebral, puzzle heart is what makes *Exit* cool. Simple but stylish graphics and extra downloadable levels don't hurt either. In fact, if it weren't for inevitable repetition and occasionally heavy controls – not good in a timed game – the score would have been higher. ■



Obstacles in your way are many and varied - fire, electricity, smoke, deadly drops, unstable flooring, conveyor belts, timed locks... and loads more

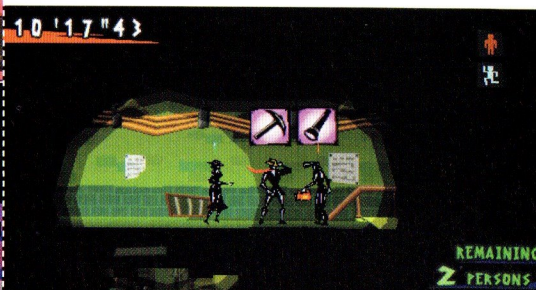


Apparently Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen designed this level.

## VERDICT

A stylish puzzler, whose slightly unwieldy control system and inevitable repetition are the only minor spanners in the works

7



## IN-DEPTH

EXIT

**Pros:** Novel concept, original visuals, heart of gold

**Cons:** Fiddly, occasionally unresponsive controls

**Graphics:** Simple, stylised and very clear. Good stuff

**Sound:** Energetic music and dialogue

**Gameplay:** Compact puzzles with lots of variety

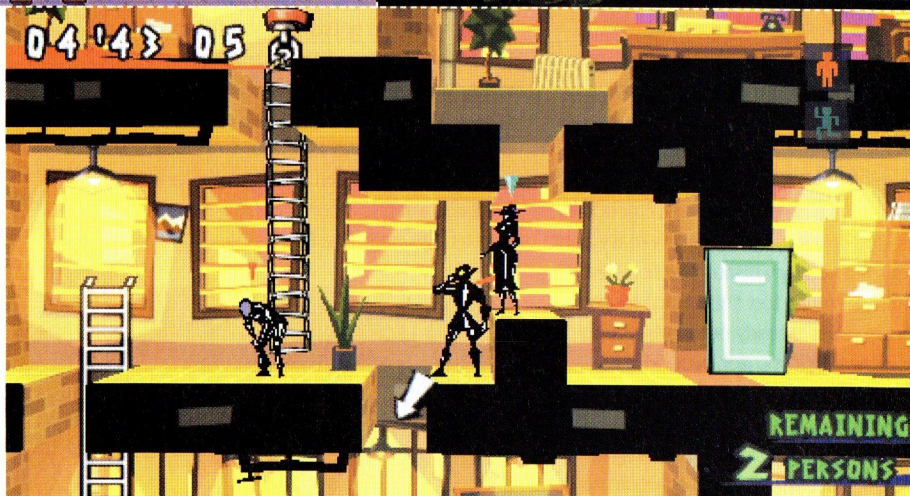
**Lifespan:** 100+ stages plus downloadable levels

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Each level is stocked with people that, in a strange diversion from familiar gaming protocol, you don't have to horribly murder



# NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED

YUP, THIS ONE'S A 'CUT AND SHUT'

● Publisher: Activision ● Developer: Vicarious Visions ● Price: £34.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: No ● Downloads: No

If you're wondering about the score (we gave *Need For Speed: Most Wanted* 8/10 on PS2) then allow us to explain. It's simple, really: there's no part of this game that hasn't already been done better on PSP by other games. And that's not good.

For starters, the handling is awful. Your first ride is a cheap hunk, so you don't expect tricked-out supercar performance right from the start, but even the tricked-out supercars feel like you're racing a bath with wheels. *TOCA Race Driver 2*, in comparison, is responsive and smooth, but *Most Wanted*'s sluggish feel makes outrunning your opponents a tedious chore. It doesn't help that it doesn't feel as fast

as it should (100mph feels like 50), and that rigging up your car with nitrous makes little difference apart from blurring the screen - there's never anything like the feeling of rocketing along like you get in something like, say, *Burnout Legends*. Even the modding's dull. There are image options, but the cars are so small and boxy, you might as well be in your mum's Cinquecento. If modding is your bag, *Midnight Club 3: Dub Edition* gives you far greater artistic freedom when it comes to car-tinkering.

There are enough brilliant racing games on PSP to suit anyone's craving. *Most Wanted* isn't broken, but it's nowhere near good enough to trouble the race leaders. Which, at the end of the day, means it's simply not good enough. ■

## VERDICT

This makes illegal street racing a grim, unenjoyable affair. Your money's better spent on *Ridge*, *TOCA*, or *Burnout...* to name a few

6

There are enough brilliant racing games on PSP to suit anyone's craving. *Most Wanted* isn't broken, but it's nowhere near good enough to trouble the race leaders



Although there's a modicum of fun to be had in putting one over the police, there are much better racing game alternatives to be found on the PSP



While *Need For Speed: Most Wanted* can be an engrossing game, it's got far too many problems to make it essential

## IN-DEPTH

NFS: Most Wanted

**Pros:** Looks decent enough, plenty of options, offers a lasting challenge

**Cons:** The handling is really very poor, there's no proper sense of speed

**Graphics:** The race circuits get boring pretty quickly

**Sound:** Listenable selection on the soundtrack

**Gameplay:** It's like racing in shopping trolleys. Not fun

**Lifespan:** There's a ton of cars to mod up to your heart's content

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# PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5

IS PES ON PSP THE GODSEND WE'VE BEEN HOPING FOR?

● Publisher: Konami ● Developer: Konami TYO ● Price: £34.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: Yes ● Downloads: No

Everybody's playing *Pro Evo* these days. Mates you thought didn't play videogames. The lad who collects the bins in our office. People who used to swear by *FIFA*. Vicars. Footballers. Girls. It's approaching a national obsession.

It makes sense, then, to make *Pro Evo 5* for the PSP. Make it playable anywhere. On the bus. On the train. Waiting in the doctor's queue. But the reality is more brutal. You'll probably be playing it alone at home, because you're not allowed to

More important is the lack of analogue sensitivity in the PSP's face buttons. Long balls and shots are still controlled with power bars but the difficulty lies in dealing with short passes. It lacks control.

## Painful betrayal

Criticising anything from *Pro Evo* is hard. It's like betraying a mate. Let's see if WiFi multiplayer can save the day... It does.

*Pro Evo* WiFi is nearly everything we'd hoped. You can forget the problems and



***Pro Evo* WiFi is nearly everything we'd hoped. You can forget the problems and get on with the business of social interaction via football**

use the TV, and this is where *Pro Evo 5*'s inadequacies become apparent.

## Seeing double

The PSP screen isn't suited to a game where seeing lots of the playing area is crucial. The wide view - default screen setting for most *Pro Evo* players - doesn't exist. The alternative makes accurate long passes difficult. The radar helps, but it's small, and it isn't always clear what's going on from a single glance.

The PSP's LCD is also prone to ghosting. When the action moves side-to-side at any speed you get double vision. When running at full speed, players appear to have two pairs of legs.

get on with the business of social interaction via the medium of football. Ultimately, *Pro Evo* PSP exposes the limitations of the hardware rather than the series itself, but we'd rather have *Pro Evo* at 60% of its potential on the PSP than no *Pro Evo* at all. Buy it anyway. ■

## VERDICT

It's *Pro Evo*, no doubt about it, and it's a thrill to have it in portable format but it just ain't quite right at the moment

8



Lack of control means the ball pings around the pitch at speed. Play devolves into a battle to hold the ball long enough to make a pass. We found the most effective way is to play more short balls, and only to players you can see on screen



Go WiFi, forget the limitations, and get on with gaming with strangers from all over...



## Why PES PSP isn't Perfect...

Shingo 'Seabass' Takatsuka, PES producer, explains the reasons behind *Pro Evo 5* on PSP's problems

### The lack of a commentary and Master League...

"We had to cut something to get loading times down. The Master League and the commentary were the first to go. I think we've worked out a way of fitting in the Master League for the next version, though. The commentary is pretty much impossible with the way the UMD works."

### The screen blur...

"The LCD screen on the PSP has a low refresh rate that causes the screen blur. Also, the game is running at only half the frame rate of that of the PS2 version. It's basically the same as the PSone days. I'm going to be talking to the team about how we might prevent this for the next version. We're also looking into better ways of using the camera and the possibility of 16:9 widescreen."

### The simplified controls...

"To be honest, when we first started the project of moving PES on to PSP the game was running like it was being played under water. We thought the best thing would be if we just gave up. The PSP simply couldn't keep up with the maths that drives the game. We put everything into what we've got now."

## IN-DEPTH

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5

**Pros:** Good WiFi multiplayer

**Cons:** Gameplay inhibited by the shortcomings of the hardware

**Graphics:** Hampered by screen blur

**Sound:** No commentary! Crap music

**Gameplay:** It's *Pro Evo*, but not as precise as we'd like

**Lifespan:** No Master League, WiFi will keep you busy

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RECOMMENDED

PlayStation Portable



# METAL GEAR AC!D

IT'S STEALTH, SNAKE, **BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT...**

● Publisher: Konami ● Developer: Kojima Productions ● Price: £34.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: Yes ● Downloads: No

**T**errorists perform a coup on an army base, looking for a new super-weapon. Spies are sent to defuse the situation, but they go missing. So the US sends in ultra agent Solid Snake, to save the... yadda, yadda. The plot template has essentially remained the same for *Metal Gears 1-3*, and so it goes in the PSP version. Snake, stealth, patience-challengingly nonsensical dialogue – it's all here and looks very, very *Metal Gear*. There is a difference, though, and it's a biggie – *Acid* is a card game.

You have a deck of cards which correspond to weapons, moves and defences that enable you to move Snake (and his lady sidekick Teliko) and make him fight. You also have a limited amount of steps depending on your hand before

your turn runs out. Think of it like chess, but with spies and soldiers instead of kings and queens.

Although far from perfect (the rules are very tough to master) it is enjoyable, particularly for the kind of fan who loves everything about the *Metal Gear* mythos. It's definitely not for series virgins (the *MGS3* link-up assumes you own the most recent PS2 game and there are tons of in-joke references), but once you get over the fact it isn't an action game, the strategic gameplay is intriguing and involving. It's very different and a lot of fun indeed. ■



**You have a deck of cards which correspond to weapons, moves and defences that enable you to move Snake (and his lady sidekick Teliko) and make him fight**



## IN-DEPTH

Metal Gear Acid

**Pros:** Full of strategy and tactics, all the *Metal Gear* atmosphere you need

**Cons:** Don't expect it to play like *Metal Gear* usually does, tough to master

**Graphics:** Good but fairly basic; very *Metal Gear*

**Sound:** Totally faithful to the series, right down to the smallest SFX

**Gameplay:** Confusing at times but enjoyable nevertheless

**Lifespan:** The first cut-scene lasts 20 minutes. 'Nuff said

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## VERDICT

It's not the *Metal Gear* you'd expect, but this turn-based card-battler is nonetheless engrossing and hugely enjoyable

8



Looks confusing, doesn't it? It's simple to grasp, though

*Metal Gear Acid* is a lot more considered than the regular *Metal Gear* games. You'll need your thinking cap on if you're going to succeed. Depending on the cards in your hand, you can only move so far...



# BREATH OF FIRE III

UNLIKELY TO SET YOUR WORLD ALIGHT

● Publisher: Capcom ● Developer: Capcom ● Price: £34.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: Yes ● Downloads: No



Where did the hours go? That's probably the first question you'll be asking yourself after a few sessions with Capcom's turn-based RPG – a PSP translation of the original PSone version. There's nothing particularly memorable about *Breath Of Fire III*, and mercifully the game doesn't require an encyclopaedic knowledge of the previous titles to understand what the hell's going on. Even so, it's as addictive as cigarettes and therefore ideal PSP fodder – providing you're not put off by the formulaic gameplay.

With the same kind of turn-based combat system that digital adventurers have grown to know and tolerate over the past decade or so, the game feels familiar and instantly playable. The plot ticks all the fantasy gaming cliché boxes. There are strangely named monsters, heroes with purple hair and villagers who need to be saved. Throw in some magic items, the ability to level-up, and long-winded dialogue sequences, and you'll be convinced that Capcom has resurrected one of the most bog-standard RPGs ever made. But a few hours in and you'll soon realise that, despite everything else, the thing has you gripped – even though the



only new feature you'll find is a fishing mode where you sit around angling with other PSP owners. Not the coolest



**It's one of the best hand-held investments you can make – but we think a cutting edge gadget like the PSP should play host to original games**

## IN-DEPTH

### BREATH OF FIRE III

**Pros:** Familiar and easy to play, it's instantly addictive

**Cons:** Formulaic gameplay and clichéd plots, a bog-standard RPG

**Graphics:** Typical PSone fodder

**Sound:** 'Classic' RPG muzak

**Gameplay:** Turn-based action done well

**Lifespan:** Large and tough to put down

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gaming session to invite your mates round for.

In terms of pounds per hour, it's one of the best hand-held investments you can make – but we think a cutting edge gadget like the PSP should play host to original games designed to take advantage of its strengths. RPG fans, meanwhile, deserve a bit more than a fishing mini-game. ■

## VERDICT

An archaic yet charming RPG, *Breath Of Fire III* is the sort of gaming popcorn that tastes plain but still keeps you munching away

6

It's charming and addictive, but *Breath of Fire III*'s incarnation for the PSP is otherwise formulaic. Enter dragons, villagers in need of saving and dull dialogue sequences



# GO! SUDOKU

JUST LIKE THE PUZZLE BOOK GAME – ONLY NOW IT'S ON YOUR PSP!

● Publisher: Electronic Arts ● Developer: Electronic Arts ● Price: £34.99 ● WiFi Multiplayer: Yes ● Downloads: No

Here's one question that anyone reading a review of *Go! Sudoku* on PSP wants answered. And the answer to that question is: "Yes. It works." Any other questions? No. Thought not.

This isn't going to convert anyone new to the craze but it is going to delight people obsessed by the world-conquering number puzzle. Playing the game on PSP is easy. The controls dial up the number you want to place with the left and right shoulder buttons, then place them with the stick or D-pad. The real issue is why you should bother. And the truth is that apart from a degree of novelty, it offers little that you couldn't get from a puzzle book. Yes, you can play against the clock, and the multiplayer

games are a bonus (if a little pointless) but at its core it's all about putting numbers on a grid and repetitive, easy, mental arithmetic. If you don't like that, then this really isn't for you.

The best news is that the 1,000 puzzles on board will keep you busy for weeks and let's not forget one of the most interesting, bizarre, qualities of Sudoku: it's possible to retry the same puzzle a few days later and get the exact same amount of fun from replaying it as you did on the first go. ■

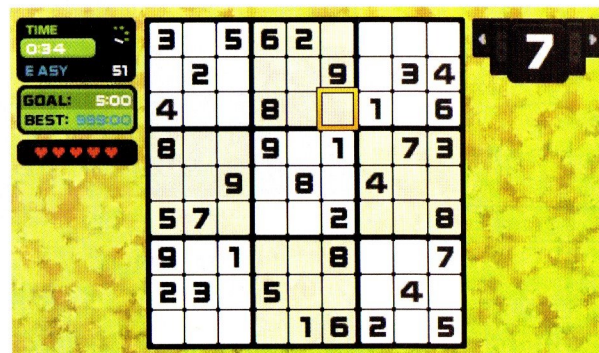
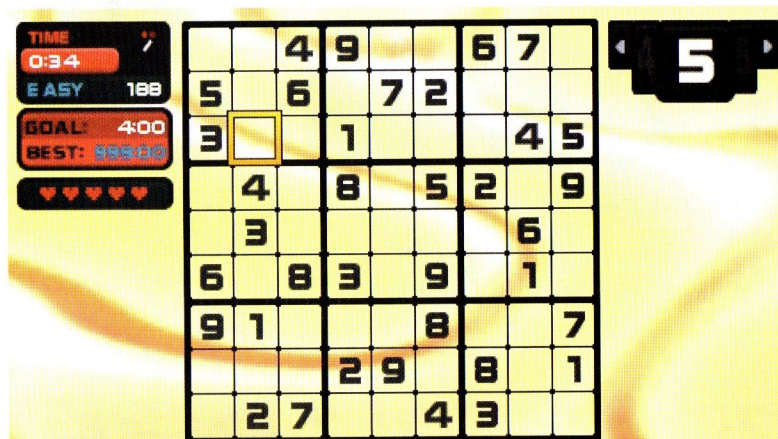
## VERDICT

Hate Sudoku puzzles? Then you'll loathe this. But if you're mad for numbers then this is a new way to play. Just like your puzzle book

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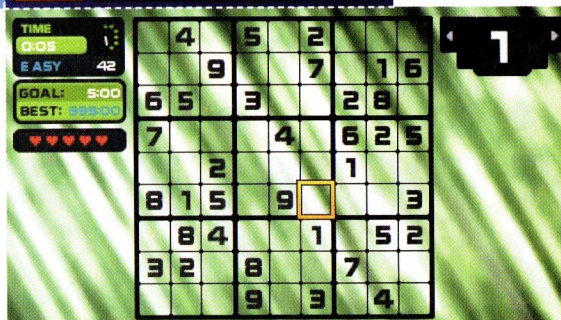
You can play against the clock, and the multiplayer games are a bonus (if a little pointless) but at its core it's all about putting numbers on a grid



It's possible to make the PSP Sudoku experience more 'exciting' by playing the multiplayer games



Playing Sudoku on the PSP is easy: use the shoulder buttons to select the number, and the stick to place it. *Burnout Legends* it ain't



## IN-DEPTH

GO! SUDOKU

**Pros:** If you love Sudoku, then you're in for a real treat

**Cons:** Conversely, if you hate numbers, then you should steer well clear

**Graphics:** Visuals will barely have your PSP ticking over

**Sound:** Numbers aren't exactly famous for their exciting sound effects

**Gameplay:** No doubt about it, Sudoku is extremely absorbing

**Lifespan:** Got the 'Sudoku bug'? Then this will feed your addiction for ages

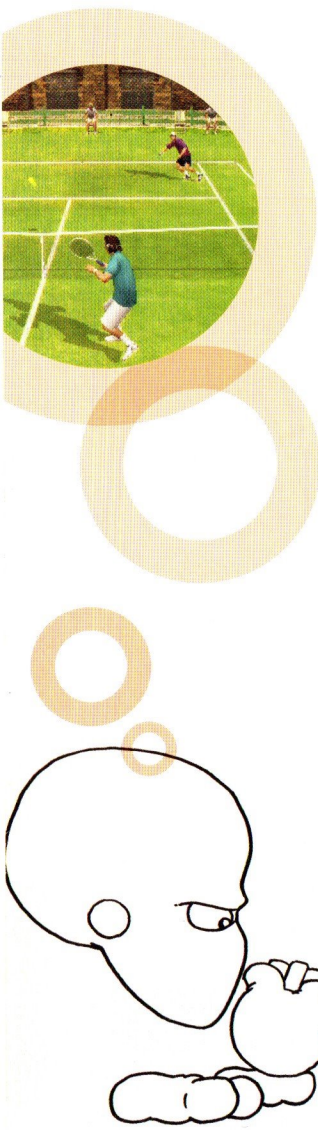
4

4

8

8





## APE ACADEMY

Monkey madness crammed with puzzles and mini-games.

Reviewed OPS2#63

7



## ATV OFFROAD FURY: BLAZIN' TRAILS

Hard to control and frustrating quad bike action.

Reviewed OPS2#63

5



## CODED ARMS

Bland shooter set inside a corrupted military computer.

Reviewed OPS2#64

5

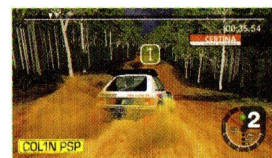


## COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2005 PLUS

Offroad racing spoiled by cluttered, hard-to-follow tracks.

Reviewed OPS2#63

6

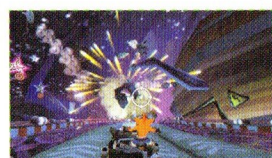


## CRASH TAG TEAM RACING

Funky platformer with okay racing tacked onto it.

Reviewed OPS2#67

7



## DARKSTALKERS CHRONICLE: THE CHAOS TOWER

Eccentric 2D fighter let down by poor controls.

Reviewed OPS2#63

6



## DEAD TO RIGHTS: RECKONING

Generic and mediocre shooter with wonky lock-on system.

Reviewed OPS2#67

6



## DEATH JR

Standard slash 'n' bash game with lavish Tim Burton-inspired cut scenes.

Reviewed OPS2#67

5



## DYNASTY WARRIORS

Quick and accessible, medieval Japan-set hack-slashery.

Reviewed OPS2#63

7



## FIRED UP

Vehicle based shooter with a hit and miss multiplayer.

Reviewed OPS2#63

7



## FORMULA ONE

A decent racer that just can't keep up with the competition.

Reviewed OPS2#63

6



## FRANTIX: A PUZZLE ADVENTURE

Challenging puzzler which sadly lacks any long term appeal.

Reviewed OPS2#67

6



## GHOST IN THE SHELL: STAND ALONE COMPLEX

Average shooter hampered by unsuitable controls and lack of design flair.

Reviewed OPS2#67

5



## KAO CHALLENGERS

Playable but formulaic platformer that lacks lasting appeal.

Reviewed OPS2#67

6

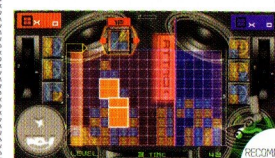


## LUMINES

Dangerously hypnotic mix of music and block puzzles.

Reviewed OPS2#63

9

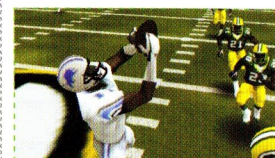


## MADDEN NFL 06

Disappointingly bland round of American footy action.

Reviewed OPS2#67

5



## MARVEL NEMESIS: RISE OF THE IMPERFECTS

Total wreck that mixes messy design with unenjoyable fighting.

Reviewed OPS2#67

3



## MEDIEVIL: RESURRECTION

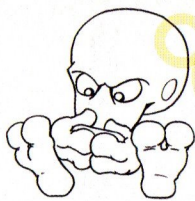
The classic comedy-horror platformer returns. Solid fun, but a vague camera makes it too tough in places.

Reviewed OPS2#63

7







## MERCURY

Unique puzzle game. Split, mix and move blobs of liquid metal through mazes.

Reviewed OPS2#63

8



## MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION

Expansive, slick street racing.

Reviewed OPS2#63

7



## MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES: EXTENDED PLAY

21 retro games of which only *Joust* and *Gauntlet* are any good still.

Reviewed OPS2#67

5



## NAMCO MUSEUM BATTLE COLLECTION

Compendium of 20 oldies that should have been left gathering dust.

Reviewed OPS2#66

2



## NBA LIVE 06

Super-strong b-ball title packed with addictive matches and challenges.

Reviewed OPS2#67

8



## NBA STREET SHOWDOWN

Hip-hop filled, stunt-heavy basketball that manages to be a bit lifeless.

Reviewed OPS2#63

6



## NFL STREET 2 UNLEASHED

An accessible American footy game in small doses.

Reviewed OPS2#63

7

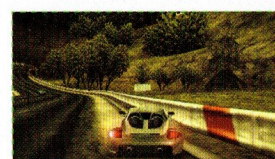


## NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND RIVALS

Seen it all before, mod-tastic street racer.

Reviewed OPS2#63

6



## RIDGE RACER

Perfectly proportioned, blissfully fast arcade racer. Utterly addictive; an essential purchase.

Reviewed OPS2#63

9



## SPIDER-MAN 2

Basic and very short web-swinging action adventure.

Reviewed OPS2#63

6



## STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT II

Marches onto PSP without losing its keen strategic edge or blister-happy action. Imperious space-battling.

Reviewed OPS2#67

8



## THE SIMS 2

The little people's handheld debut works brilliantly. Better than its PS2 cousin.

Reviewed OPS2#68

8



## TOCA RACE DRIVER 2

Authentic racer with an intriguing, plot-led story mode and superb depth.

Reviewed OPS2#63

8



## TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2 REMIX

Time consuming, one-more-go skateboarding action.

Reviewed OPS2#63

8

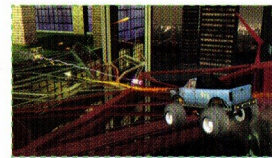


## TWISTED METAL: HEAD ON

Anarchic but unforgiving motoring shooter.

Reviewed OPS2#65

5



## UNTOLD LEGEND: BROTHERHOOD OF THE BLADE

Monotonous, uninspiring role-playing adventure.

Reviewed OPS2#64

6



## VIRTUA TENNIS: WORLD TOUR

Simple-but-deep arcade tennis perfection.

Reviewed OPS2#63

8



## WIPEOUT PURE

Retina-searingly fast space racer, that boasts an impressive raft of downloadable extras.

Reviewed OPS2#63

8



## WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Awkward racer with impressive array of vehicles.

Reviewed OPS2#65

6



## WORLD SNOOKER CHALLENGE 2005

Comprehensive snooker experience tuned perfectly to PSP.

Reviewed OPS2#63

7

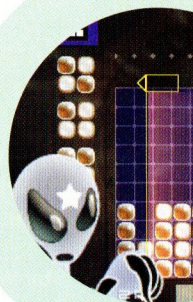


## WORLD TOUR SOCCER: CHALLENGE EDITION

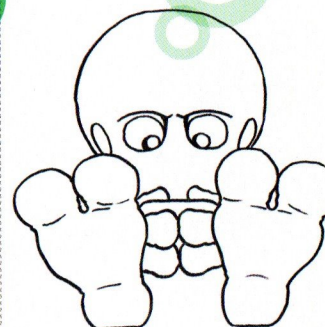
Likeable enough footy game marred only by awkward controls.

Reviewed OPS2#63

7



[REVIEWS ROUND-UP]





# FILM FILE

**T**he best thing about the PSP is that it's much more than just a games machine – it's a total entertainment system. And with the latest UMD film releases you can take your favourite movies with you wherever you go. Everything from classic horror to comedy and action. Perfect for when you want to take a break from gaming or fill the hours on a long journey. Over the next pages we round up the best movies around. For prime viewing, you might want to invest in a deluxe toilet seat. ■



## [INCOMING!]

The very latest UMD movies on a shop shelf near you now

Star Wars Episode III: Revenge Of The Sith

Gangs Of New York

The Long Good Friday

Independence Day

Texas Chainsaw Massacre

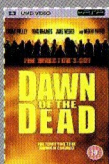
Sixth Sense  
(06 March)

Big Fish  
(06 March)

The Goonies  
(13 March)

Labyrinth  
(13 March)

## [HORROR]



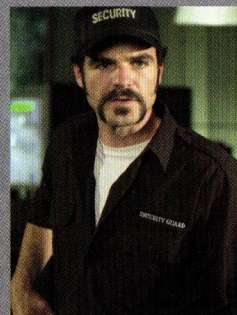
### DAWN OF THE DEAD

**Distributor:** Entertainment In Video

**Rating:** 18

**Extras:** Trailers, deleted scenes

Though thematically similar to the 1978 original, this *Dawn* remake is hugely reworked and thoroughly modern. Sarah Polley is superb as leading lady Ana, the pre-credit opener is breathtaking (especially for zombie fans), the characters develop engagingly, it never lags and the ending is a jawdropper. Oh, and it's just as gory and harsh as it should be – no more, no less. Thoroughly indispensable undead fun. **8 ■ 10**



### SAW UNCUT

**Distributor:** Entertainment in Video

**Rating:** 18

**Extras:** None

We're going to ignore the clever-clever title. Much like we did the original poster quotes of 'You must see *Saw*'. Still, the setup's brilliant – two strangers awake chained up in a room with a corpse and later discover the only way to escape this hell is to kill the other prisoner. Rammed with clever twists alongside the gruesome mental and physical torture. **7 ■ 10**



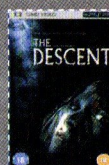
### THE EVIL DEAD

**Distributor:** Anchor Bay

**Rating:** 18

**Extras:** None

Terrifying enough to be banned in Ireland, West Germany, Finland, Iceland and Singapore when it first appeared in 1981. It's a low-budget horror in the slasher tradition – five teens head into the woods only to accidentally unleash a demonic power (hey, we've all been there) that destroys them one by one. Well, all except the funny and now iconic Ash (Bruce Campbell). Groovy. **8 ■ 10**



### THE DESCENT

**Distributor:** Pathé

**Rating:** 18

**Extras:** Making of, Commentary

Written and directed by the man behind cult shocker *Dog Soldiers*, this superb British horror flick follows a group of cavers as everything goes supernaturally wrong deep underground. The intrinsic claustrophobia of the caves only adds to the gripping teased-out tension as something in the dark comes for them, while the all-female cast make for an intriguing bunch of characters. A tough, scary and unmissable film. **9 ■ 10**



### 28 DAYS LATER

**Distributor:** Fox

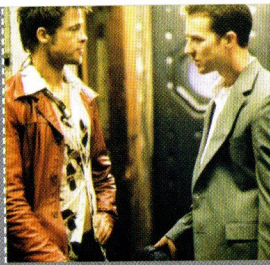
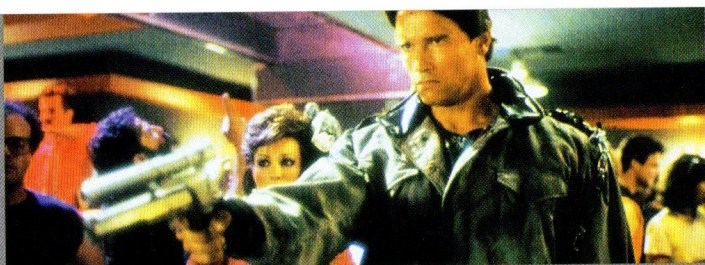
**Rating:** 18

**Extras:** Alternative ending

Danny 'Trainspotting' Boyle's post-Romero zombie romp is most striking for its depiction of an empty and ruined London – destroyed along with most of humanity by a rage virus. Our hero Jim (Cillian Murphy) wakes from a coma and escapes to Manchester... only things aren't going too well up north either. Features deadly fast-moving zombies plus an even scarier Christopher Eccleston as a fascist bully boy army man. **8 ■ 10**







## [ACTION]



### THE TERMINATOR

**Distributor:** Sony  
**Rating:** 15  
**Extras:** None

As perfect a role as Arnie ever had, his robo-assassin from the future who hardly says anything started out as a low-budget obscurity but became one of the biggest franchises of all time. Directed by James "Titanic" Cameron, this is a tight-as-a-drum classic that drips with tension as the Terminator hunts down Sarah Connor – the mother of the man who will lead the future resistance against the evil robots. **9 ■ 10**



### BAD BOYS

**Distributor:** Sony  
**Rating:** 18  
**Extras:** Trailers

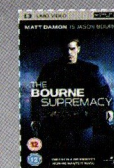
Martin Lawrence and Will Smith star in this buddy cop actioner. And despite Lawrence's character being like an old stand-up routine that wasn't that funny in the first place, the family man/player routine works well. It helps that almost everything they touch in the (very *Miami Vice*) course of the investigation explodes, dies or explodes and dies. **7 ■ 10**



### BLACK HAWK DOWN

**Distributor:** Sony  
**Rating:** 15  
**Extras:** None

Part uncompromising critique, part-romanticised war celebration, *Black Hawk Down* is an uncomfortable hybrid but still better than you might first think. It's a raw, furious representation of an increasingly disastrous US mission into the city of Mogadishu, Somalia. **8 ■ 10**



### THE BOURNE SUPREMACY

**Distributor:** Universal  
**Rating:** 12  
**Extras:** None

Intelligent sequel to *The Bourne Identity*, in which super-spy Jason Bourne (Matt Damon) is framed for murder. But just because it's got a brain doesn't mean it's not fun as well. There's running, frenetic car chases, more running, moments of peril and innovative fist fights. Highly recommended. **8 ■ 10**

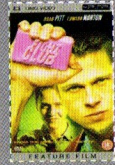


### THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW

**Distributor:** Fox  
**Rating:** 12  
**Extras:** None

The end of life as we know it is suitable for kids aged 12 and up? And in a post-9/11 world even tidal waves are too respectful to knock down New York's buildings? But almost incredibly, despite the clash of subject matter and PC hand-wringing, *The Day After Tomorrow* works really well. Jake Gyllenhaal is great as the hero, the effects are lush and Emmy Rossum is a fittingly lovely love interest. **7 ■ 10**

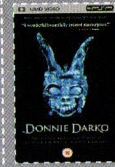
## [DRAMA]



### FIGHT CLUB

**Distributor:** Fox  
**Rating:** 18  
**Extras:** None

Not much about pink soap, not much about Brad Pitt fighting without a top either – there's way more to *Fight Club* than its advertising implied. Even ignoring the overall theme of meaningless consumerism and a life postponed indefinitely for the reward of possessions, there's much to enjoy. Pitt, Ed Norton and the gorgeous Helena Bonham Carter are excellent, while the script is stand-out. The characters, situations and the twist are all enthralling. Genius. **10 ■ 10**



### DONNIE DARKO

**Distributor:** Sony  
**Rating:** 15  
**Extras:** None

At once a time-travelling sci-fi, a satire on middle America, a love story, a black comedy and a retro '80s celebration, this has something for everyone – except the people who just 'don't get it'. A giant rabbit announces the end of the world to Donnie and... well, what transpires is bizarre, funny, sweet, thought provoking and brilliantly acted. A modern classic. **9 ■ 10**



### AMERICAN HISTORY X

**Distributor:** Entertainment In Video  
**Rating:** 18  
**Extras:** None

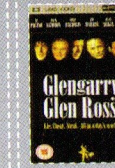
Edward Norton is typically excellent as reformed neo-Nazi Derek Vinyard in this harsh, though sometimes simplistic, exploration of racism, fear and hatred. In jail for a vicious racist attack, Vinyard eventually comes to understand that his beliefs are demonstrably stupid and wrong. He returns home only to find his hero-worshipping younger brother slipping into the same weak-minded lifestyle, and struggles to save him. **8 ■ 10**



### BLUE VELVET

**Distributor:** Sanctuary  
**Rating:** 18  
**Extras:** None

The white picket fences of *Blue Velvet*'s suburban America contrast starkly with the subterranean deviance of its characters, lead by Kyle MacLachlan and a terrifying Dennis Hopper. MacLachlan follows a strong 'whose ear is this?' detective plot while all else is mad like wasps. Brilliant, totally compelling, but absolutely not for kids. **9 ■ 10**



### GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS

**Distributor:** Granada  
**Rating:** 15  
**Extras:** None

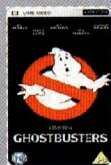
Blessed with an almost embarrassingly gifted cast – Kevin Spacey, Al Pacino, Ed Harris, Jack Lemmon, Alan Arkin – this tenses-than-tense exploration of stress and rivalry among a group of high-pressure salesmen is a totally absorbing, touching and efficient study of the modern working man. Jack Lemmon is an absolute revelation as the floundering Gil – finish the movie with dry eyes and you're officially inhuman. **9 ■ 10**



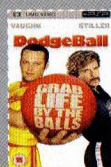


## [COMEDY]

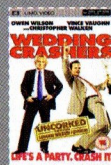
## [SCI-FI]

**GHOSTBUSTERS****Distributor:** Sony**Rating:** PG**Extras:** None

If you're young, *Ghostbusters* is scary. If you're a bit older it's a genius comedy. If you're a bit older still, it's Sigourney Weaver looking really surprisingly sexy in some silky curtains. Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd and Harold Ramis are hilarious as parapsychology pros who start a ghost removal service just in time for New York to come under serious supernatural threat. A true event movie and one of the guiltiest pleasures of '80s cinema. **8 ■ 10**

**DODGEBALL****Distributor:** Fox**Rating:** 12**Extras:** None

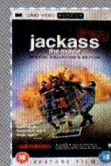
Ben Stiller and the always-excellent Vince Vaughn face off as rival gym owners, with Stiller representing the airheaded consumerist Globo Gym and Vaughn playing the down-at-heel everyman as Peter La Fleur. Peter needs to find \$50,000 to avoid a Globo takeover – the amount offered, coincidentally, by a local dodgeball tournament. Guaranteed to make you do that sudden, incredibly loud laugh you instantly regret. **9 ■ 10**

**WEDDING CRASHERS****Distributor:** Entertainment In Video**Rating:** 15**Extras:** None

A mix of sweet romance, dirty lad's comedy and close-to-the-bone setups, *Crashers* features Vince Vaughn and Owen Wilson as divorce mediators who invade weddings to take advantage of romanced-up ladies. Inevitably, one of the guys eventually falls in love with a beautiful bridesmaid (Rachel McAdams) and things then get very complicated very quickly. Happily, they also remain consistently funny. **8 ■ 10**

**BAD SANTA****Distributor:** Sony**Rating:** 15**Extras:** None

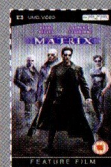
A department store Father Christmas befriends a lonely, obese child and absolutely no feel-good things happen. Instead, Billy Bob Thornton's Santa is a drunken misanthrope who, along with his foul-mouthed dwarf, is only there to plan a robbery. The relentless meanness is a hilarious antidote to the usual Christmas schmalz. **9 ■ 10**

**JACKASS: THE MOVIE****Distributor:** Paramount**Rating:** 18**Extras:** None

Johnny Knoxville, Bam Margera, Steve-O and the rest of the crew do incredibly painful and silly things for what feels like 87 minutes. And is. But whatever you're opinion of the *Jackass* concept, you will laugh for at least 22 minutes of that. If you're the sort who bellows like you've lost control whenever somebody so much as bangs a shin, however, this is your *Citizen Kane*. **6 ■ 10**

**ALIEN****Distributor:** Fox**Rating:** 18**Extras:** None

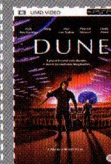
Often described as 'a haunted house in space', but at least as spooky as anything ever set on Earth. The tension, the character interaction, the dialogue, the acting, the sets – it all stands the test of time 26 years on. And, of course, there's THAT monster. Even the celebrated sequel couldn't compete on quite the same footing – going for action rather than outright horror. **10 ■ 10**

**THE MATRIX****Distributor:** Warner**Rating:** 15**Extras:** None

The original and easily the best, the Wachowski brothers' tale of a man who realises the horror of his own banal existence really is someone else's fault brilliantly blends kung fu, gunplay, *Blade Runner*-esque existential angst and sunglasses. Carrie-Anne Moss looks delicious in leather, while the other stars – Fishburne, Reeves – dust off their best serious faces. Meanwhile, Hugo Weaving almost steals the whole shebang as the iconic villain, Agent Smith. **9 ■ 10**

**ROBOCOP****Distributor:** MGM**Rating:** 18**Extras:** None

Often imitated but usually misunderstood, *RoboCop* has some interesting ideas beneath all that violence (it's a Christ allegory, basically). Peter Weller plays a cop fatally injured in a crime-ridden future Detroit, only to be resurrected as the titular cyborg. Unfortunately for the crims, his memories haven't disappeared and now he's a heavily armed robot and a bit upset. **9 ■ 10**

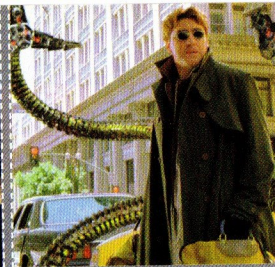
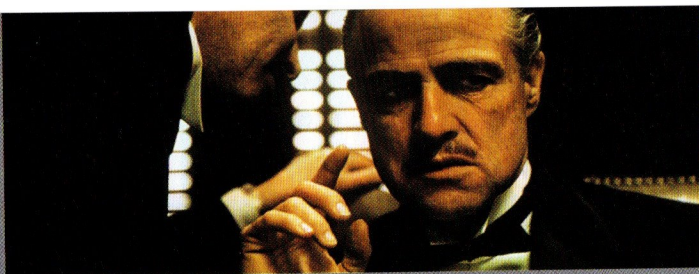
**DUNE****Distributor:** Sanctuary**Rating:** PG**Extras:** None

This adaptation of Frank Herbert's 'classic' novel is a sprawling, often brilliant but ultimately flawed epic. With Sting in it, *Dune* concerns a spice vital to space travel, the murderous machinations of an evil baron and a man who might be the messiah, played by Kyle MacLachlan. He's called Usul Muad'Dib Atreides, although, helpfully, his first name is Paul. **6 ■ 10**

**THE ISLAND****Distributor:** Dreamworks**Rating:** 12**Extras:** None

Ewan McGregor and Scarlett Johansson play unsuspecting clones stored as replacement organ-bags in a futuristic high-security compound. Brewed and bottled by Sean Bean's villainous Doctor Merrick, they get too close to the truth and escape from their prison – cue 90 minutes of dumb but fun running, driving, and exploding. **7 ■ 10**





## [CRIME]



### THE GODFATHER

**Distributor:** Paramount  
**Rating:** 18  
**Extras:** None

Oh come on – you know by now. The complex, interwoven plot, the heavily atmospheric visuals, the staggering who's-who-of-'70s-cinema cast – this is simply the best film of a generation. Following the lives of a high-powered mafia family in 1950s New York, the movie encompasses power struggles, political intrigue, love, revenge, loyalty, violence... Brilliantly intellectual but also packing a mean punch, the end result is nothing short of astonishing. **10/10**



### SE7EN

**Distributor:** Entertainment In Video  
**Rating:** 18  
**Extras:** None

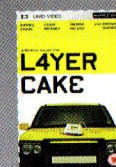
Even for a serial killer flick this is grim: drop-kicking viewers with an ending that might, in the biggest understatement of all time, be described as 'a bit of a downer'. Brad Pitt and Morgan Freeman are superb as cops trailing unhinged zealot Kevin Spacey as he murders according to the seven deadly sins. **10/10**



### SNATCH

**Distributor:** Sony  
**Rating:** 18  
**Extras:** None

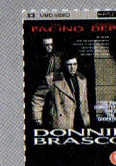
Somehow a film featuring two Americans, a Puerto Rican and a 'Welsh' footballer has become the archetypal British gangster flick. Something like an English *Pulp Fiction*, this violent and stylish cockney-geezer-wideboy-innit-boshbosh-movie draws great performances from, oooh, everyone as diamonds are heisted, boxing matches are fixed, shooters are blagged and Vinnie Jones goes nutso. **8/10**



### LAYER CAKE

**Distributor:** Sony  
**Rating:** 15  
**Extras:** None

Daniel Craig – who we still refuse to believe is being allowed anywhere near 007 – is great in this underworld thriller. His successful coke dealer is planning to 'retire', but gets pulled right on back into a perilous, backstabbing criminal world for, oh yes, one last job. Damn those pushers, neo-Nazis and thieves. Have they no honour? **8/10**



### DONNIE BRASCO

**Distributor:** Entertainment In Video  
**Rating:** 15  
**Extras:** None

Johnny Depp plays Donnie Brasco in this based-on-a-true-story slice of mob life. Or rather, he plays Joe Pistone, a deep undercover cop who finds himself a little more sympathetic to the gangsters (or at least, to Al Pacino's Lefty Ruggiero) than he should be. This is a hugely atmospheric study that portrays the hoods as deluded losers rather than glamorous bad boys. **9/10**

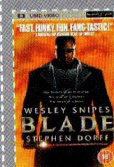
## [COMICS]



### SPIDER-MAN 2

**Distributor:** Sony  
**Rating:** PG  
**Extras:** None

Almost unreasonably good and actually better than the first movie, this sequel manages to splice action, humour, suspense and romance together perfectly. Kirsten Dunst is, of course, both excellent and gorgeous as Peter Parker's love interest Mary Jane, while Alfred Molina also excels as the mechanically enhanced bad guy Doc Ock. And it's already hard to imagine anyone but Tobey Maguire as Spidey. **9/10**



### BLADE

**Distributor:** Entertainment In Video  
**Rating:** 15  
**Extras:** None

Underrated, this: the martial-arts-heavy fight sequences are excellent, the pace is snappy and *Blade's* world is instantly believable – even if vampiric battles for the future of humanity aren't typically your thing. Okay, it might not work if *Driving Miss Daisy* is your favourite film, but Snipes is ace as Blade and we think he'd also make a fine chauffeur in his spare time [impales Miss Daisy, stylishly. End credits]. Yay! **7/10**



### CONSTANTINE

**Distributor:** Warner  
**Rating:** 15  
**Extras:** None

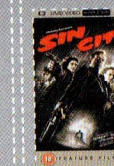
Keanu Reeves is the titular hero, a supernatural cop who, much to his obvious annoyance, can see angels and demons on account of having visited Hell on a few memorable occasions. Set in modern Los Angeles, the film blends staple elements of horror and action (even channelling *The Matrix*) into an entertaining and stylish, if slightly confused, whole. **7/10**



### HELLBOY

**Distributor:** Sony  
**Rating:** 12  
**Extras:** None

Though even further down the list than Daredevil at the Superheroes Annual Ball, Hellboy turns out to be a damn sight more interesting. Ron Perlman does a cracking job as the hero, bringing real personality and humour to the demonic misfit despite being buried under latex and competing with near-absurd levels of frantic action. Liked *X-Men*? Then this is definitely one to watch. **8/10**



### SIN CITY

**Distributor:** Buena Vista  
**Rating:** 18  
**Extras:** None

A gorgeously stylised film noir, fanatically faithful to its graphic novel roots. It's as hard, surly and bitter as could be, though not lacking in humour – the dead-on-the-money one-liners never stop. Bruce Willis, Mickey Rourke and Clive Owen are great as tattered good guys making a stand against the corruption that's rotting the soul of Basin City. The result is a stunning hard-boiled thriller that you'll watch over and over. **9/10**



# [DO IT YOURSELF]

Want more from your PSP? You've come to the right place...



## MOVIES



Watch blockbuster movies and must-see TV, anywhere...



### PACKING A CINEMA INTO YOUR POCKET

Since the launch of the PSP movie studios have started to support the UMD movie format and the majority of major film releases are now found in high street stores on both DVD and UMD.

As well as new Hollywood movies, a back catalogue of over 400 UMDs has already accumulated with prices as low as £12 on retail website [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk). With releases as diverse as *Peter Kay: Special Edition* and *Blackadder Season One* due in the coming months there should be something to suit the most 'specialist' tastes.



With the PSP already blessed by enough great games to fill your Christmas and birthday wishlists a couple of times over, it would be an understandable oversight to forget what a perfect portable movie player it is too. For while other, lesser handheld systems restrict you to just audio, your PSP has the ability to not only play movies in near DVD quality, but to do so in perfect pocket cinema format thanks to its glorious 16:9 LCD screen.

This is possible thanks to two new amazing pieces of technology. First is the UMD disc, created especially for PSP but set to feature at the core of Sony's upcoming portable products. It's the format games and movies come on and the runaway success of the PSP means that many big-name movies are already available on DVD and UMD.

The second advance is the Memory Stick Duo, Sony's smallest storage device. This acts as a storage mechanism for downloaded movies and TV shows. The maximum currently available is up to 2GB - plenty of room for a few legally obtained episodes of *Lost* and *The Simpsons* - while 4GB and 8GB versions are planned for release later on this year. ■

### MOVIES TO MEMORY

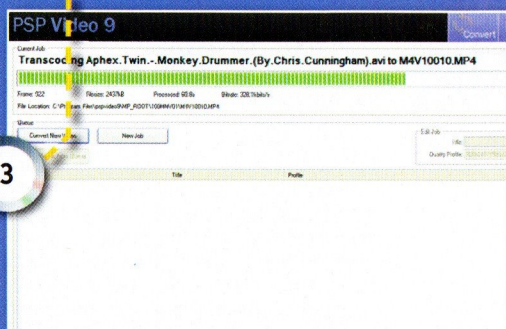
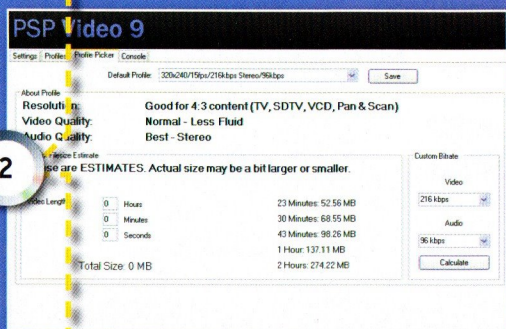
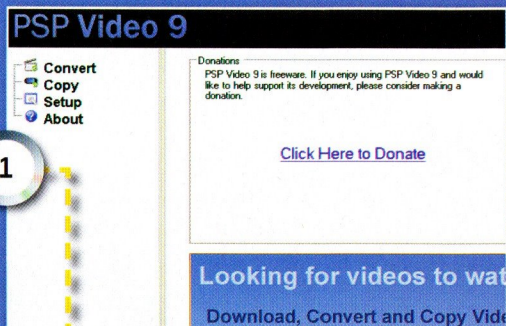
CONVERTING YOUR DVD COLLECTION OR OPTIMISING YOUR HOME MOVIES FOR YOUR PSP ISN'T AS HARD AS YOU MIGHT THINK...

Got video files you want to watch on the go? Follow our simple guide...

PSP only plays certain types of video file - MP4, AVC - so you need to convert your movie file before you can play them on your PSP. The easiest way to do this is by using a program like PSP Video 9, available at [www.pspvideo9.com](http://www.pspvideo9.com). It's free and easy to use, and transfers the finished files to PSP automatically.

Download the program and choose your video settings in the 'Setup' tab. Tinker with the resolution, frame rate and so on until you've found the balance between video quality and file size that suits you (you may want to use the 'Profile Picker' with its automatic settings and descriptions of the quality level).


Now click the 'Convert' tab and select 'Convert New Video'. Find the file you want to copy from the menu. Once converted, PSP Video 9 automatically prepares the file so that your PSP can find it. Plug your PSP into your PC's USB port, click the 'Copy' tab and you're away.







# MUSIC

 Listen up! Find out why the iPod's are numbered

## [MP3]

The standard format for compressing a sound sequence into a very small file (about one-twelfth the size of the source file) while preserving the original level of sound quality. Typically, 1MB is equal to one minute of music through MP3s. Oh, and for any Luddites out there who don't know, you get MP3s by downloading music from a CD or website onto a computer.

## [ATRAC]

As well as MP3s, PSP can also play ATRAC music files - Sony's own music format that has a higher compression than MP3, therefore enabling you to store more files. However, besides being less well-known than the MP3 format, ATRAC is also slightly less user-friendly as it requires the use of Sony's Sonic Stage software to transfer files to your PSP.

## [AVLS]

As with Sony's MiniDisc players, PSP features the Automatic Volume Limiter System (AVLS) to prevent you bursting your eardrums when you're listening to music through headphones. But if you like your music REALLY LOUD, just turn AVLS off in the PSP's sound settings and you can whack the volume up. What?

## [A-B]

PSP has a cool playback featured called A-B Repeat where you can cut out a chunk of a song. Just select a point for the passage to start (A) and stop (B), then you can repeat it to your heart's content. Ideal for replaying those really epic guitar solos!

**W**alkman, Discman, MiniDisc, PSP...? Although it's predominantly a games machine, PSP also has the capacity to be the latest in Sony's long line of hugely successful music playing portables. And in an era where music on the move has never been more popular - thanks almost entirely to the must-have appeal of Apple's iPods - PSP is the logical giant leap forward towards an integrated all-singing, all-dancing portable.

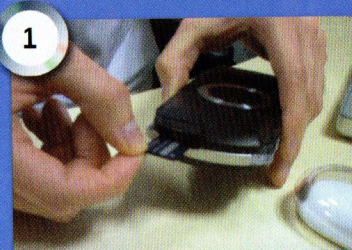
To unlock this potential to save music, photos and game data on your PSP, you'll need a Sony Memory Stick. Versatile and extremely user-friendly, a Memory Stick is the portable memory device of choice for anyone storing digital content.

Although sticks come in all shapes and sizes, the PSP is compatible with just two types: the Memory Stick Duo (32MB, 64MB and 128MB versions) and its higher capacity brother, the Memory Stick PRO Duo (256MB, 512MB, 1GB and 2GB versions).

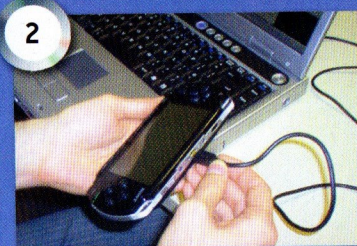
With a Memory Stick Duo or PRO Duo inserted, you can connect a USB cable to the top of the PSP, hook it up to your computer and then save music files on your PSP in a similar way to storing music on MP3 players.

Of course, the amount of music you can store depends on your Memory Stick's capacity. PSP isn't a dedicated music player, so don't expect the massive 20-60GB storage of an iPod. But the PRO Duo (2GB) gives you over 400 music tracks and 24 hours of continuous music - not bad for a portable games machine. ■

## TRANSFER MUSIC TO YOUR PSP



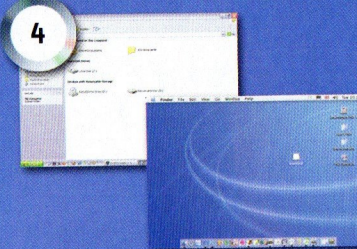
1 Insert a Memory Stick Duo or Memory Stick PRO Duo into the slot on the left of your PSP.



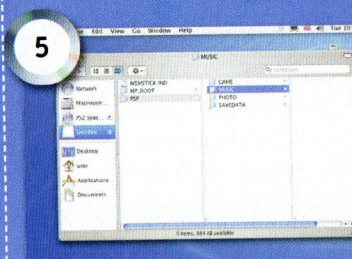
2 Connect one end of a USB cable to the USB port at the top of the PSP and the other end to one of your PC's/Mac's USB ports.



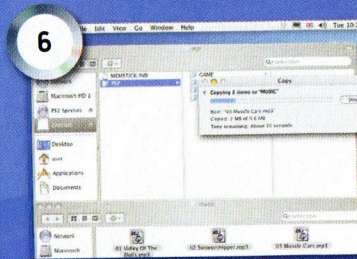
3 Go into your PSP's settings menu and select 'USB connection' to activate the USB link to your computer.



4 PC: Click the Removable Disk icon in your PC's 'My Computer' folder. That's the Memory Stick. Mac: Click on the 'Untitled' icon that appears on your Mac's desktop. That's the Memory Stick.



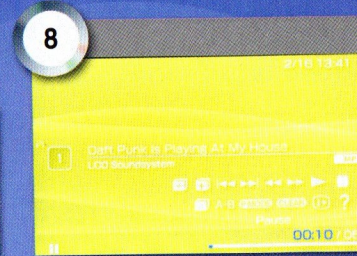
5 A number of folders appear. Click on the PSP folder, then click on the Music folder to access your PSP's music storage.



6 Now simply drag MP3s from your computer into the Music folder to store them there.



7 To close folders on a PC, right click the Memory Stick icon and select 'Eject' to safely disconnect it. To close Mac folders, drag the Memory Stick icon to the wastebasket to eject it.



8 Choose your PSP's Music operation and you'll be able to play any of the music files you've just transferred. Groovy!



# WiFi



Play games and surf the web – through the air! The wonder of wireless

**O**n the left side of the PSP is quite possibly the most significant switch in mobile gaming history. It's the switch that enables or disables the PSP's integrated WiFi adaptor and it's a gateway to multiplayer gaming heaven and a whole lot more besides.

WiFi is short for 'Wireless Fidelity' and it enables devices like computers, mobile phones, and now the PSP, to connect to the Internet or each other without any need for extraneous link-up cables, external modems or phone points. Providing there's a WiFi network point in the area (also known as a Hotspot), your PSP will detect it and be able to go online thanks to its in-built 802.11b wireless LAN networking capabilities.

But forget the numbers and the jargon, all you need to know is that it works. Whether you're at home, in an airport, a hotel or a fast food joint, you can multiplay against strangers and surf the Internet.

Mainly though, PSP WiFi is about multiplayer gaming. With the WiFi switch turned on, you simply select a multiplayer mode and the game will seek out other players in the area. It's that quick. It's that simple. ■



Once you've set up your PSP for Internet access in the Network settings menu you can surf the web wirelessly



Both *Tekken: Dark Resurrection* (out summer) and *OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast* (out now, below) feature WiFi multiplayer

## WHAT IS WiFi?

The lowdown on life without wires

### Q How does WiFi work?

A: WiFi signals operate in the 2.4 and 5GHz radio bands which are also used by many mobile phones. The radio signal connects WiFi-enabled devices to the wireless network at broadband speeds. The network operates through base stations called access points (or Hotspots), which connect to high speed lines back into the Internet. Many newer electronic devices such as the PSP come equipped with WiFi antennas and software. As a result, selecting the WiFi setting on the PSP enables you to connect to the network immediately and it also displays all the available WiFi signals in your location.

### Q What are the benefits of WiFi?

A: Wireless access to a high-speed Internet service provides users with freedom and flexibility. In the case of the PSP, it enables multiplayer gaming without the need for peripherals such as link cables and multitaps. In fact, opponents don't even have to be in the same room as you.

### Q How fast is WiFi?

A: WiFi connectivity speeds depend on the quality of the signal, your distance from the Hotspot and how many people are using that Hotspot at a particular time. PSP uses the standard 802.11b connection which transmits information at a maximum speed of 11 megabits per second.

### Q What is the range of access with WiFi?

A: The WiFi signal typically extends to about 150 feet from a Hotspot. However, the range will be reduced when there's metal or concrete in the way.

### Q Can I surf the Internet with PSP WiFi?

A: All European PSPs are Internet-enabled, although there are a few restrictions. Flash-enabled sites won't work, and because of the screen size, some sites don't display well, however, future firmware updates may integrate Flash support.





**TALKMAN**  
Travelling abroad?  
Take your PSP to  
bridge the language  
divide. Read how in  
the Preview section  
on page 26.



“On the left  
side of the PSP is  
quite possibly the  
most significant  
switch in mobile  
gaming history”

## [WIRELESS GLOSSARY]

An A-Z of useful terms from the wireless world

### 802.11b:

A standard for wireless Internet access that offers connection speeds up to 11 megabits per second (Mbps) between the access point and WiFi-enabled devices. This is integrated into the PSP and enables wireless connection to the Internet, and between PSPs for multiplayer gaming. 802.11b is equivalent to the Apple Airport card which provides wireless networking in Macs.

### 802.11g:

A new wireless technology that provides faster connection speeds than 802.11b – up to 54 Mbps. Equivalent to the Apple Extreme Airport card.

### Access Point:

Any location where a WiFi signal can be received.

### Bandwidth:

The amount of information that can be transmitted in a given period of time over a wired or wireless network. Bandwidth is expressed as bits of data per second, or bps.

### Hotspot:

Another name for an access point located in public locations, such as airports or cafes, where a wireless signal for an Internet connection originates.

### Roaming:

Roaming agreements between WiFi providers enable customers to obtain service from another provider's Hotspot, usually for a nominal charge.

### T1 Connection:

A high-speed Internet connection carrying data at a speed of 1.54 Mbps for uploads and downloads. These lines are often used to connect a Hotspot to the network.

### WiFi Alliance:

An association formed to certify standards for wireless products.

### WiFi:

Short for Wireless Fidelity, WiFi is the popular term for the technology that lets you connect to the Internet at broadband speeds without using wires. It also lets you connect wirelessly with other WiFi-enabled devices, as with the PSP.

### WLAN:

Wireless Local Area Networks enable users to connect to a local area network (LAN) through a connection using wireless access.



# [GLOSSARY]



PSP jargon getting you down? Allow us to explain

## A

**Action-adventure:** A style of game that has strong character and narrative elements combined with third-person or first-person action.

**ADSL:** Asymmetrical Digital Subscriber Line. A variety of Internet connection, capable of faster bandwidth speeds than dial-up.

**AI:** Artificial Intelligence. Typically refers to the ability of computer-controlled characters, vehicles, etc to mimic human behaviour and perform independent decision-making.

**Aspect Ratio:** A measurement of screen size, described as a ratio of its width to its height. Standard video has an aspect ratio of 4:3, for example, whereas widescreen is commonly 16:9.

**ATRAC3:** Sony's proprietary music file format. It offers better security (see DRM) and heavier compression than MP3, meaning that music files can be smaller while maintaining excellent sound quality. The PSP is capable of playing ATRAC3 files, as well as MP3s.

**Avatar:** Your visual representation in an online environment. Commonly represented by a character, vehicle etc.

## B

**Bandwidth:** The amount of data that your Internet connection is capable of transferring per second. This is measured in kilobits or megabits – for example, a 56k modem is capable of transferring 56 kilobits per second, while a 1Mb broadband connection can handle one megabit per second, and so forth.

**Bit:** A single unit of data that's either 1 or 0 (on or off) and is the foundation of all computation. See Kb, Mb, Gb.

**Bit-rate:** The quality of an MP3 recording; the higher the better. Defines how much physical space one second of audio or video takes in bits.

**Broadband:** Any high bandwidth digital Internet connection, such as DSL, ADSL or ISDN.

**Bump Mapping:** An in-game lighting effect applied to a texture to make it look three-dimensional when light hits it at an angle.

**Burning:** Colloquial term for recording media (music, movies, games etc.) to a CD or DVD. (See also: Ripping.)

**Byte:** An amount of memory or data, usually eight bits. The smallest addressable unit of storage.

## C

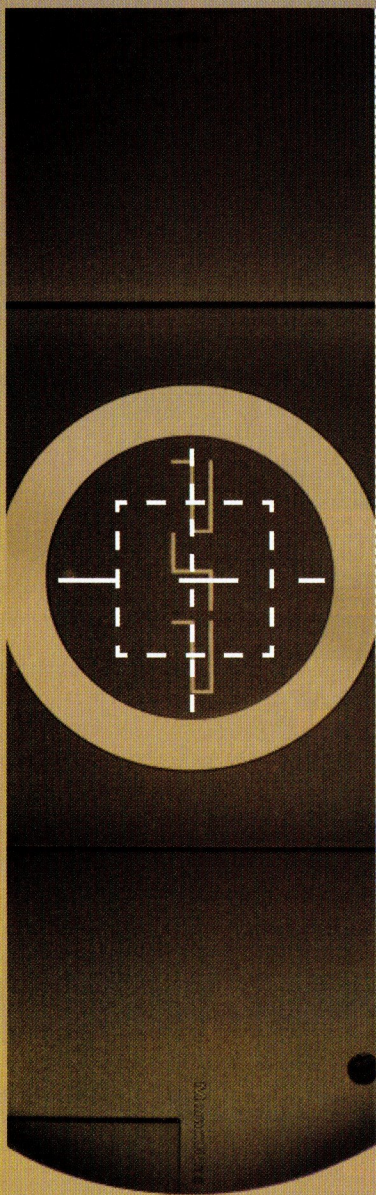
**Code:** Software; in particular, a game. Commonly-used games-industry term, but increasingly adopted by gamers.

**Compression:** The reduction in a file's size to make it more portable. Compressed files (music, movies and video) tend to be lower quality than the source file.

**CPU:** The PSP's brain. It performs the mathematical calculations that tell the other parts of the console what to do, and how to use any software the machine is running.

## D

**Data rate:** The amount of data that can be sent through a communications circuit in a second. This figure effectively governs the performance of any component.







**Developer:** The individual or team of individuals who create, design and program a game.

**D-Pad:** The cross-shaped control pad on the front of your PSP.

**DRM:** Digital Rights Management. This is used by a wide range of technologies to prevent file-copying and sharing. DRM-protected music tracks refuse to play on computers other than their owner's.

**DSL:** Digital Subscriber Line. A variety of Internet connection that works across a standard telephone line. DSL connections come in a variety of bandwidths.

## E

**E3:** The Electronic Entertainment Exposition. An annual event held in Los Angeles, at which games-industry software and hardware developers present their latest projects to retailers, distributors, publishers, press and the public.

## F

**File Format:** Files come in different formats for different purposes. Bitmaps and JPEGs, for example, are two image-file formats. The former is designed for high-resolution imagery, while the latter uses compression to make the image files smaller, but with a resulting loss in image quality.

**File Sharing:** Transferring media files between computers using a peer-to-peer network such as Gnutella or eDonkey. Programs such as Kazaa and Limewire allow you to do this by searching other people's computers for the files you want. However, copying (or allowing to be copied) copyrighted material is an illegal practice.

**Flash memory:** Solid-state memory to which files and data can be written – such as the Memory Stick Duo.

**FPS:** First-Person Shooter. Gun game played from a first-person perspective.

## G

**Gb/Gigabyte:** An amount of memory or data amounting to 1,024 Mb.

**GPS:** Global Positioning System. A device that uses military satellite data to pinpoint the user's exact location.

**GPU:** The Graphics Processing Unit is the silicon brain behind the stunning graphics that PSP pumps out.

## H

**Hotspot:** An area within which a WiFi-enabled device, such as a PSP or laptop, can connect to a WLAN. Hotspots are commonly found in coffee shops, airports, larger railway stations and so forth.

## I

**IRC:** Internet Relay Chat.

**ISDN:** Integrated Services Digital Network. A variety of Internet connection, which used to be the fastest available kind, but is now superseded by the faster and cheaper DSL and ADSL lines.

**ISP:** An Internet Service Provider is a company that provides Internet access, such as British Telecom.

## J

**JPEG:** An image file in which data is compressed to make the file smaller. Your PSP can display JPEG images.

## K

**Kb/Kilobyte:** An amount of memory or data amounting to 1,024 bytes. To give you an idea of size, a sentence of words in a word processor file is equivalent to approximately 1Kb of memory.

## L

**Latency:** The time taken to deliver a packet of data from the source to the receiver – ie a server to your PC or PSP. Commonly measured in milliseconds. Latency and bandwidth are the most influential factors governing the speed and stability of Internet connections.

## M

**Mb/Megabyte:** An amount of memory or data amounting to 1,024 Kb.

**Middleware:** Developers' software tool that connects two otherwise separate applications, or a product that serves as the glue between two applications.

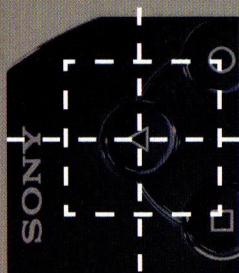
**Mipmapping:** A graphical routine that decreases texture detail the further the object is from the player. By rendering less detail on some objects the CPU is able to draw more objects on screen simultaneously.

**Model:** A model is a 3D wireframe of triangles that, when enveloped in a texture, looks like an object.

**MP3:** The world's favourite music-file format, because it is capable of reproducing excellent sound quality for a relatively small file-size.

**MPEG:** The movie-file equivalent of MP3, the MPEG is popular because it offers reasonable visual and audio quality in a compact file size. The PSP plays MPEG-4 files, the fourth and most advanced generation of MPEGs.





**N**

**NPC:** Non Player Character. A named rather than generic character in a game that is computer-controlled (see AI).

**P**

**Particle effects:** Graphical effects that utilise tiny dots of colour to create explosions, muzzle flare, smoke and other gaseous effects.

**Physics:** The laws of physics applied realistically to objects in a game world. This means friction, gravity and other forces that influence in-game movement, creating more believable game environments.

**Polygons:** The triangular building blocks of 3D objects. Polygons consist of flat triangular shapes that are stitched together to create the illusion of 3D.

**Q**

**QA:** Quality Assurance.

**R**

**RAM:** Random Access Memory. RAM is the PSP's short-term memory and effectively governs the amount of data the machine can access at any one time.

**Rendering:** The process of creating a realistic looking 3D model out of polygons and textures.

**Ripping:** Colloquial term to describe the copying of media files (movies, music etc) from a CD or DVD to your PC or PSP.

**Router:** A device, connected to a network, which forwards packets of data to other sources, such as a series of computers.

**S**

**SDK:** Software Development Kit. The SDK is a set of tools and applications used to create a game or game element.

**Server:** A remote computer that stores, controls and passes data between other computers via a network like the Internet.

**Specs:** The technical specifications of a device, such as the PSP.

**T**

**T1:** A variety of Internet connection, commonly used by businesses as it can handle data and voice transmissions. The bandwidth of a T1 line is rated at 1.544 Mbps.

**TCP:** Transmission Control Protocol. A network protocol responsible for verifying the correct delivery of data from client to server.

**Texture:** A detailed but flat image that is applied to a 3D model to give it surface detail.

**U**

**USB:** Universal Serial Bus. A type of connection on a device that enables it to be plugged into another USB device, such as PC and PSP.

**UMD:** Universal Media Disc. Sony's proprietary new media format.

**V**

**VOB:** Video Object. A core file-type on DVD discs, containing the actual audio-visual data.

**W**

**WiFi:** Wireless Fidelity. Device networking without the need for physical wiring. This comes in two standards: 802.11b and 802.11g. The latter is newer and faster than the former. Your PSP utilises 802.11b to communicate with other devices.

**WLAN:** Wireless Local Area Network. A group of devices connected via WiFi (see above). A group of PSPs playing *Ridge Racer* over WiFi essentially creates a WLAN.

**X**

**X-Black:** Sony's proprietary TFT (Thin Film Transistor) technology, that offers improved colour, clarity and wider viewing angles on visual displays than standard TFT technology. The PSP has an X-Black screen, as used in the latest Sony VAIO laptops.

**XMB:** Cross Media Bar. Another name for the PSP's menu.

**Z**

**Zip File:** a file that has been compressed by a computer to make it smaller, and thus quicker to download.

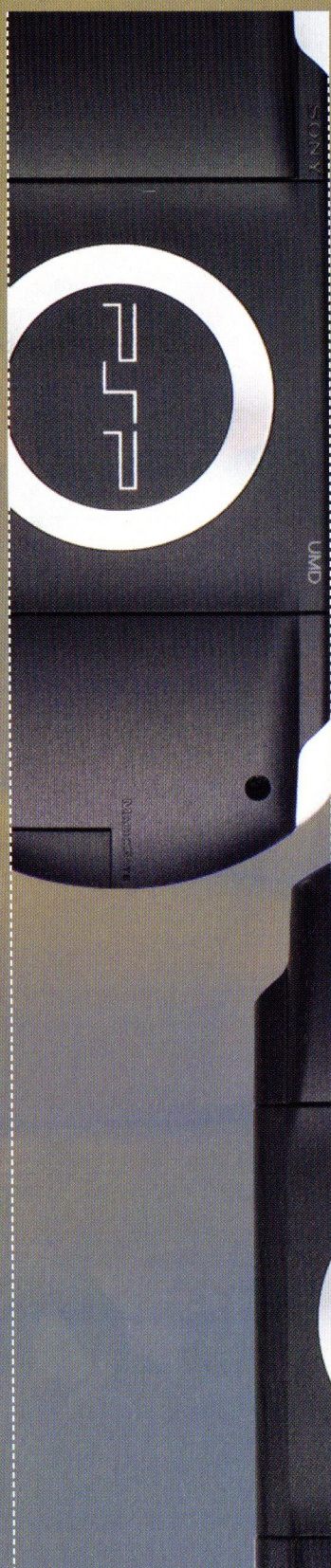




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# [50 CENT]

50 CENT CHATS TO US ABOUT THE MAKING OF *BULLETPROOF* AND WHAT HE'S UP TO NEXT...

**S**o Fiddy, the game's out in the shops now and doing really well.

**Is it safe to assume you're pleased with the end result of *50 Cent: Bulletproof*?**

Uh huh! I'm more than happy with the end result. I feel like I made a great decision to make my own game as opposed to doing voiceovers for someone else's game.

**Are you pleased with the way your character looks in the game then?**

For sure! Though my arms aren't that big in real life...

**How has the reaction from your fans been?**

Yeah man, everyone who's into my music has been cool. They're loving all the content, and the ability to play as me.

**Are there any skills or abilities in *50 Cent: Bulletproof* that you wish you had in real life?**

Well I wish I could get hit by a car and be able to get right back up for a start...

**You've already got a game and a film out. What can we expect next from the 50 Cent Empire?**

I got the G Unit watches about to hit retail anytime now. I've got a new company I've invested in called Gamergrafix. They make a whole bunch of PSP skins, and a ton of real nice high end stuff.

After becoming a part of the video game world it made perfect sense for me to get involved with a company that does stuff like that. Overall I'm just exploring a bunch of other opportunities that are available to me at the moment.

**Can we expect to see another 50 Cent film in the cinemas in the future?**

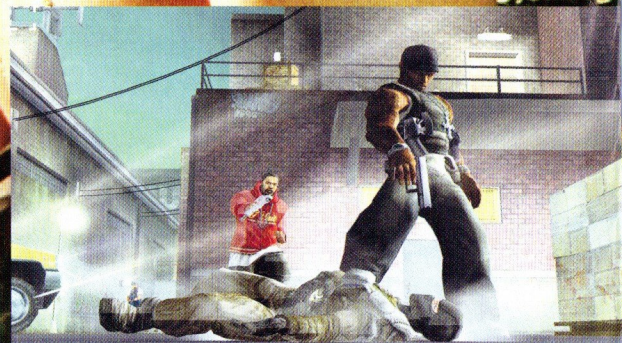
Yeah, I just signed a development deal, so I'll be producing more films in the future.

**Can we expect the same sort of thing as *Get Rich Or Die Tryin'* then?**

Well, no one makes the same film twice, but yeah, similar sort of stuff.

**Were you involved in the whole process of creating *50 Cent: Bulletproof*, from the conception of the game through to the final production?**

Well I got Terry Winters, who wrote the screenplay for *Get Rich or Die Tryin'*, to come up with the concept for my game – he came up with the fictional plot. I actually spent about 30 hours in the studio doing voice overs for the game. I did all the green screen photography – so the character would actually look like me! – along with Dre, Eminem and the rest of G Unit, they all put it in, too.







**Thirty hours! That's a lot of hard work. Did you find the creative process of making a film and game different to making an album?**

Yeah, but there's a lot of hard work, like the programming and marketing that I'm not involved with. Then again, I did record all the exclusive tracks for the game, along with the 40 or so other tracks on the game. There's a lot of planning in there. It's not that different from creating an album.

**But you'd do it all again for a sequel?**

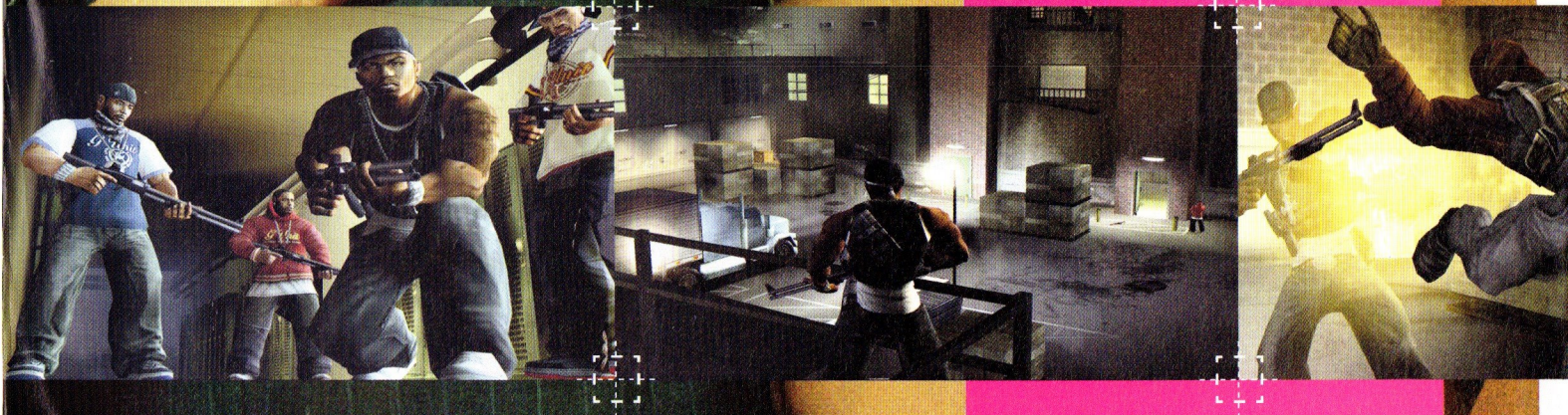
Yeah, for sure.

**If you could work with any musical artist, living or dead, who would you choose and why?**

Man, there's so many to choose from, but I'd have to say Tupac. For sure. The guy was a genius.

**You're obviously working hard on lots of different projects at the moment. What would a normal day off for 50 Cent be like?**

You know, at the minute I don't really take much time off. If I'm not working I get up and have a work out, but by lunchtime I'm bored. I can't just sit around doing nothing. I've got to get into the studio. I've got a studio in my house, so I'll be there most of the time. In fact, Dre had to have his studio taken out of his house, because he was never resting or sleeping, he was always in there. ■





[NEXTMONTH]

# NEXT MONTH

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